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The Message of the Disciples for the Union of the Church

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of this volume.

Lectures Delivered Before the Yale Divinity School, New Haven

The Message of the Disciples for the Union of the Church

Including Their Origin and History

By

PETER AINSLIE

Minister Christian Temple, Baltimore, Maryland; President Commission on Christian Union of the Disciples of Christ

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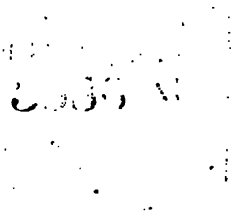

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 125 North Wabash Ave.
Toronto: 25 Richmond Street, W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

To my grandfather

PETER AINSLIE

of Edinburgh, Scotland (1788–1834), first a Presbyterian, then a Baptist, then a Disciple of Christ and all the time a Christian;

and to my father

PETER AINSLIE

of Dunnsville, Virginia (1816–1887), a Disciple of Christ and always a Christian, both ministers of the Gospel and both throughout their lives unreservedly committed to the union of the divided house of God

Foreword

ON the decision to publish these lectures in book form, the lecturer asked a committee of well-known Disciples of Christ, representing the East, Middle West and Southwest of the United States, to pass on the correctness of the interpretation of the message, origin and history of the Disciples herein given in order that it may not rest upon the bare words of the lecturer. This committee consisted of F. D. Kershner, president Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas; F. W. Burnham, minister First Christian Church, Springfield, Ill., and E. B. Bagby, minister Twenty-Fifth Street Christian Church, Baltimore, Md., and they are of one accord in their approval. It only remains for the lecturer to acknowledge his indebtedness to these gentlemen for their courtesy and many valuable suggestions.

PETER AINSLIE.

Baltimore, Md.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

LECTURE ONE

The Message of the Disciples of Christ

IN giving the message of the Disciples, I hope that I shall not drop into the error of giving the message of the men who lived a hundred years ago, or even of the men who lived in the last decade, for to be true to my Lord Jesus and my fellows, it must be borne in mind that our widening experiences change the horizon of our belief. Were I to be otherwise, I would dishonour the memory of my father and my grandfather, both of whom were ministers among the Disciples, the latter pleading for a united Church by a return to the Scriptures in association with the Haldanes in Scotland, the year that Campbell wrote his Declaration and Address. To be otherwise I would dishonour both the fundamental principles of the Disciples and the memory of Alexander Campbell himself, who said: "I have endeavoured to read the Scriptures as though no one had read them before me; and I am as much on my guard against reading them to-day, through the medium of my own views yesterday, or a week ago, as I am against being influenced by any foreign name, authority or systems whatsoever."

This marked distinctly Campbell's conception

both of the message and of the spirit of the movement of which he was the recognized leader for more than half a century, and likewise it is the position of all students who are seeking to know God better, irrespective of systems of theology or the interpretations of yesterday. Conditions change, human opinions change, interpretations change, only the Bible is the changeless book.

I

One of the greatest hindrances to-day to Christian union is that the various communions have stuck their stakes somewhere in the past, may be centuries ago, around the thoughts of their founders, as though those men, godly as they were, were as infallible as the writers of the New Testament, and the result is that every advance is made in the face of protests. I do not say that the Disciples are entirely free from this same spirit, for we are but men. Sometimes among us there is a disposition to quote what the fathers say as a rallying cry and a warning not to go beyond their thoughts and practices. But from whatever source it comes, it is an old story —old as the human race. Paul contended against it, as did Wyclif, Copernicus, Galileo, Luther, Calvin, Milton, Wesley and Campbell, and every soul that has dared to look out of its day into the morning of another has had to fight it. Whether

done by the Disciples or any other communion, it is a violation of the principles of progress—the same progress that we see in the Scriptural dispensations, the same progress that we see in the laws of nature, the same progress that is manifest in human thought.

These are not days for radical departures. Revolutions become necessary only when progress is impeded. They are abnormal conditions due to the arrest of progress. No revolution ever suddenly broke forth. Even the French Revolution, as sudden as it appeared to have been, had back of it years of tardy growth, and had as wise statesmanship controlled the affairs of France at that time as of England, for both countries were slaves to the feudal system, the disaster might have been averted. But the people's long pent up desire for another day broke forth, and the doors of the Bastile went down before the cry of a populace who simply wanted freedom, the atmosphere of which fanned their cheeks, while the bonds of serfdom held them fast.

It was so in the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Had Hildebrand been pope or Leo X less extravagant and Tetzel less bold there would have been no violent break such as turned Europe into a field of martyrdom. So of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Had the various communions been less arrogant with their systems of theology and more loyal to Protestant principles

there would have been no occasion for such merciless assaults upon creeds and ecclesiastical authorities.

But that need not be so again. One of the mottoes of scientific advance clearly expresses nature's law: *Natura non facit saltus*—nature does not take leaps. Let the law of progress work and its advance will be as gentle as the growth of the grass beneath our feet or the appearing of the stars in the sky. These are days of calm thought, for we are moving amid great crises. Flowers are growing and human sympathies are breaking out of their accustomed boundaries like opening petals out of the rosebud. We are living in a new atmosphere, new because it is another day. Yesterday was good enough for us when we were in it, but it is not good enough for us to-day to go back into it to live, unless the Roman Catholic oppression of the sixteenth century and the credal slavery of the eighteenth century are better than the freedom of the twentieth century. However, with those who prefer yesterday over to-day, I have no quarrel, but God is opening around us the pages of nature's commentary to remind us of the higher paths, where love is law and peace will be attained through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let me, at the outset, attempt to correct two erroneous impressions regarding the Disciples. First, let me say that the message of the Dis-

ciples is not an invitation to all Christendom to come over and join us. That is not now and never has been the position of the Disciples, and those who have so interpreted their message understand neither the message nor the greater problem of the union of Christendom. For instance, if even one of the larger communions should decide at their next annual gathering to abandon all of their denominational machinery and join the Disciples, it would well-nigh swamp us, for already we are taxed to our limit, and often beyond it, in our effort to take care of our rapidly growing membership, and to-day that condition presents the most serious internal problem among us as a separate communion. No, it is not for other communions to come over and join us. Were that true, our message would parallel that of the papacy and the Lambeth quadrilateral, but it makes no such proposal. It cites those facts upon which most Christians are agreed, leaving the interpretation of those facts to private opinion.

And, second, let me say that because we take the New Testament as our sole rule of faith and practice and wear the names Christian and Disciples of Christ, we do not claim that we are *the* Church at the exclusion of others, neither do we recognize that any other communion can claim that to itself. Its claim is as out of place as ours would be. We are dealing in facts, not

theories. The Church of Christ is divided and the Disciples are a society of brethren, seeking to find the paths of peace, whereby the divided Church may be united, and we desire to be brethren to all who are brethren in Christ, irrespective of creeds or denominational names. We believe that we have made a definite contribution to the peace of Christendom, but we do not believe that we know it all. We have not stopped our search, but using what has been found Scriptural and reasonable, and against which the world's best scholarship and piety have made no dissent, we are still pursuing our task. We have, however, no schemes to work. We have no wares to sell. We have no claims to any copyright of the truth, nor are we seeking denominational prestige, nor asking appreciation of any one for whatever service we have rendered.

If this movement is of God, He will not forget us; if it is not of Him, we desire it to be forgotten; but, believing that it is of the Lord, we are students of the problem of Christian union above all other issues in the Church—not every Disciple, but thousands of us are students—not infallible students, but students like the rest of mankind, and we frankly give the results of this research to the Church at large, as Copernicus gave the results of his discovery to the scientists of his day and Columbus, as the results of his

westward venture, to the crown of Castile. It is then to the divided Church to determine whether they see anything worth while in all this toil and achievement for our common cause.

Our results may serve as a basis to another movement. We do not know and we do not care, but that they have a value their history has proven beyond question to all unprejudiced students of the union of Christendom, aside from the fact that it is the first definitely organized movement in the history of the Church for the healing of its schisms. All movements in the name of God count for something, whether they be the Brothers of the Common Life with Thomas à Kempis writing his "Imitation of Christ," or the Pietists of the Lutheran Church with Philipp Spener as court chaplain at Dresden pleading for genuine piety in religion, or the Quietists of the Roman Catholic Church with Fenelon defending Madam Guyon's conception of true holiness against Bossuet's assaults. Movements have come up in the Church like flowers in the garden. They bloomed, sweetened the atmosphere, dropped their petals and faded away, but the garden is still here and God, as of old, walks in the midst of it and around Him are new growths, and it is to us to find the value of what grows in the garden. "What is a weed," said Emerson, "but a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered?" We are

living in the alphabet period of the world's history and to each of us is assigned the task of arranging the letters in order to read the message of another's cause, and to the degree of God in us the letters spell the worth of what we read.

If it be asked whether the interpretation that I am now giving to the message of the Disciples is universally believed and practiced by the 1,300,000 members, I do not hesitate to say that I regret my answer has to be in the negative, and I need not go into the causes other than to say that the tendency to legalism has often stolen the spirit of catholicity from the message of the Disciples and made it sectarian and weak. We are a democracy with no commanding voice among us and consequently there are varieties of interpretations, and these in time will settle themselves. Those, however, who dissent from my interpretation are no less my brethren, and the interpretation that I give has back of it the conviction and practice of hundreds of thousands in all parts of the world, both in the pulpit and in the pew, whose lives and utterances are giving vision and hope to hearts that are sincerely yearning for peace in the house of God.

Christian union is not a doctrine; but, like Christ Himself, it is a life, and only this phase of it is the chief interest to us. The Church is divided by schism and consequently love is marred, life is weakened and the conversion of

the world is hindered, therefore above all the other issues of Christendom is the union of the Church of God. I do not mean a federation of the communions, as helpful as that is. I do not mean a mechanical union of all Christians, although that is far better than division, but I mean nothing less than a union like that for which Jesus prayed and without which the world cannot be won to Him. The two great commandments of the Scriptures are: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "thy neighbour as thyself." If we have kept only the first, we have done great violence to the second, and history is our solemn witness. No wonder Sir Robert Walpole said: "Don't read history to me, for I know that it cannot be true." But it stands as a grim witness to our fratricidal struggles, to which Jesus came to bring cessation.

Older than the New Testament and above all ordinances, stand these two essential principles of religion, to which the Scriptures and ordinances are but servants. One is as essential as the other, and to separate one from the other both are weakened. For Christianity to be equipped for the conquest of the world, love among Christians is as essential in practice as the belief that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God is essential to living faith. It is the love

that runs beyond all definitions and systems of theology, and he only knows it who practices it.

In the apostolic conception, schism in the body of Christ, as is expressed in present denominationalism, stands by the side of adultery, drunkenness and idolatry and, writing to the Galatians, Paul boldly declared: "I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It was a clear-cut issue, and the apostle sought to bring up the conscience of the early Church on schism by the side of its conscience on the grosser sins.

The Roman Catholic Church maintained union in part by the sacrifice of liberty, while Protestantism maintained liberty at the sacrifice of union, but the time has come when both union and liberty can be maintained in the Church of God, and the history of nations is proving it. The Church to-day has a conscience on adultery, drunkenness and idolatry and would not for a moment tolerate the practicing of these sins on the part of the ministry and the people. In recent years there has been a rapidly growing conviction in all communions that union is better than division and when the whole Church has a conscience on love among Christians, and it is bound to come, division will be as impossible then as an adulterous, drunken and idolatrous ministry and Church is impossible now.

The prayer of Jesus is: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." There can be but one interpretation of that prayer and that is that the normal condition of Christianity is one flock, and therefore denominationalism as we have it to-day is an abnormal product and incompetent to carry out the program of Christ. It is an idle dream for the Greek or the Roman Catholic or any one of the Protestant communions to think of conquering the world for Christ. It is against Scripture, against history and against reason. Talk about the conquest of China, India and Japan, we are not taking our own home land for Christ, for the combined Christian membership is not a third of our population, and many of these are only nominal Christians. The chief explanation of this condition is found in the divisions of our American Christianity. The world has wearied of our strife, so that while the Church has been trifling away its time with its shibboleths, socialism and kindred movements have been rising in Europe and America seeking to find a basis for the brotherhood of mankind, just as the inertia of the Church of the sixth and seventh centuries offered an opportunity for the rise of Mohammedism or anything else with its panacea for human discord.

It cannot be denied that natural sociability and mutual advantage impel men to union. It is an inherent force in human nature. One of the chief purposes of Christianity is to remove every barrier and make it easy, permanent and spiritual for men to come into a fellowship for which they were created and out of it to develop into the highest of earth's products. Instead, the schismatic condition of Christianity is defeating the purpose of its existence and making the impression upon unbelievers that schism is the order of heaven, which the most worldly of unbelievers knows is not true from his own natural desire for friendliness. Thus millions are hostile to the Church and see no advantage in its fellowship.

The prayer of Jesus is the breath of God against the walls that divide the flock, whether those walls be built upon national peculiarities or doctrinal differences. The walls must come down. It is the prayer of Jesus, and just as the Holy Spirit came at the fullness of time in answer to His prayer, a united Church shall arise to its world task, likewise in the fullness of time, in answer to the prayer of that same Jesus. He knew the weakness of Peter and He prayed that his failure might not be absolute; so He knows us—us Christians of all creeds and names—and, looking through the centuries, He saw our weakness—our schismatic spirits—and the power of

the prayer that lifted the penitent apostle back to confidence is the power that surrounds us to-day, and through the prayer of Jesus a humble and penitent and divided Church shall become one flock as there is one Shepherd—a union not by one communion surrendering to another, nor by several communions compromising together, but a union closer than that between children of the same parents—a union the ideal of which is like that between Jesus and the Father. Call it quixotic or whatever you please, but it is as far above anything we have now as Jesus was far above all conditions of His day.

He who turned the wicked heart of Saul of Tarsus into a heart like His own, is able to fully conquer His Church from sectarianism and unbrotherliness in order to equip it for the conquest of the world and, like the devout Jews of old, who diligently sought to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, it is our part as believers in Jesus to yield our hearts afresh in seeking for the way to His united Church, for the union of the Church of God is as much a part of the divine program as the death of Jesus on the Cross and His resurrection from the tomb.

II

In sympathy with this program and passion of Jesus the Disciples humbly present to Chris-

tendom the results of their research as far as they have gone in their study for a Scriptural and reasonable way to the peace of Zion:

1. That division in the Church of God unconsciously hinders the spiritual growth of all believers and directly defeats Christ's program for the conquest of the world, therefore the union of Christendom holds priority over all other issues at this time.
2. That since the Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus furnish the basis of Christianity, acknowledgment to those facts out of a living faith in Him and obedience to Him is the all-sufficient basis for the union of the divided Church.
3. That since no one on earth is infallible, we should abandon all systems of theology as tests of fellowship, making them schools of thought, and go directly back to the Scriptures, reading them as though they were first published to-day, frankly asking, Who is the speaker? When is he speaking? What does he say? And how would he bring one to Christ?
4. That since there are two covenants—the Old and New Testaments—and the first being "done away in Christ," the second, or New Testament, is the only book of authority in the Christian life, with due reverence and study of the Old Testament, which was God's covenant with the Jews.
5. That, in the plan of salvation, the order in the New Testament appears to be, hearing

the Gospel, believing it, repenting of sin, confessing Jesus as the Christ and being baptized in obedience to Him, as man's part.

6. That from the New Testament, baptism appears to be a spiritual, symbolic ordinance, performed by immersion of the penitent believer into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
7. That Scriptural names for believers express more definitely the believer's relationship to Christ and are less conducive to division than any others.
8. That the remembrance of the death and resurrection of Jesus by the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper appears from the New Testament to have been the practice of the early Church, and its weekly observance is most salutary in its effects upon the lives of believers.
9. That the interpretation of these facts, and others generally accepted by the Church, are matters of private opinion, as is the order of worship and likewise the organization, which beyond elders and deacons in each Church, and even that organization is not essential, appears to be left to conditions as they arise, only that the spirit of Christian democracy be maintained.

These conclusions were the result of a most careful research for a union basis by a scholarship and piety that found them just as Kepler found his laws of planetary motion. They sought for

facts, irrespective of consequences, and committed themselves without reservation to conclusions that were irresistible, and we regard their discoveries as simple and free from sectarianism according to their presentation and practice. There was a time when hardly any one of these conclusions was accepted by any of the Protestant communions. To-day there is no one of them but is accepted by some of the communions, so that it can no longer be said that any of them is the distinctive position of the Disciples.

The only distinctive peculiarity of the Disciples now remaining is that the Disciples is the only communion that persistently seeks for unity by comprehension of them all, and we hope as the years go by that even this last remaining distinctive peculiarity may be taken away, for we desire far more to be like all Christians than to have anything that differentiates us from the least of the communions of Christendom. And in addition to this, the Disciples present eighty years of history with the practical working of these results, which has been attended by phenomenal growth.

The message of the Disciples aims to deal with facts rather than with interpretations. But some may ask, Do you allow all Christians to observe with you the Lord's Supper? Certainly, for we are all brethren together. And do you require of those whom you baptize to join your Church? No, frequently it is best that they should not,

for they can perhaps do more good in their own communions. There are already thousands of people in the various communions giving substantially the same message as the Disciples, in both pulpit and pew, and we rejoice at it, for it makes less sectarian our message, and the same cause thereby is being advanced from other quarters.

Plain as these results look to us, we do not think less of other Christians, who do not accept them, and no Christian should be offended at us for presenting them, our action being purely out of a desire for the peace of the Church, and we conscientiously believe that it is the most practical contribution that has been made to the solution of this grave problem; neither are we disappointed because the whole Church has not accepted them, Scriptural and reasonable as they appear to us, for we recognize sincere piety and unquestioned scholarship among those Christians who do not think as we do. It takes time for souls of even the same piety and scholarship to find the same view-point, and how much longer must it necessarily take for the masses of Christians with their varied degrees of piety and scholarship? The best of minds differ, and in patience and courtesy we must wait our time and be no less faithful to our task.

If what we are doing in this common cause is not recognized by our brethren of other communions, that is of small concern. The conference

of Thorn was made possible by the influence of George Calixtus, the apostle of Christian union, yet his own communion denied him a seat in its councils. It was three hundred years after Grotius wrote his "Rights of War and Peace" before the international court was established at the Hague. We desire the love and confidence of all Christians, but at the same time we love the freedom of Scriptural research and we believe that we serve our brethren of other communions best in presenting some definite contribution for the peace of the Church, even though at the first presentation it raises a storm. This is natural, for it undermines long established traditions, as any other definite result would do.

In the meantime, there must be frankness, confidence and courtesy. Personally I believe in the pre-millennial coming of our Lord. I never understood my Bible until I got that view-point, and it has been a blessing in my life. To me it is as fundamental as His birth in Bethlehem, His death on the Cross, or His resurrection from the tomb, and there is more said about it in the Scriptures than on all these subjects combined. Few of the Disciples, however, agree with me, although it is solemnly said: "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation," but do I think them any less Christian because they do not agree with me on the second advent of Christ? Cer-

tainly not. I believe that baptism of a penitent believer by immersion into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit was the only apostolic practice of baptism according to the New Testament. I believe that every believer ought to be so baptized, for it is frankly said: "We are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." However, many of my pedo-baptist brethren honestly differ with me on this, but do I think them any less Christian? Certainly not, for if they saw it as I do, they would do it too and even more, for it may be as truly said of them as Paul said of the Roman Christians that their "faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

But as a union basis, and it is that with which this message is concerned, the immersionists have the better position from the single fact that their baptism is universally accepted by pedo-baptists, while the baptism of the pedo-baptists is accepted mainly by their own household. At the same time, the pedo-baptists are in a better position to lessen the friction on baptism than the immersionists. A few immersionist Churches here and there receive the unimmersed and the

number will increase, but not nearly so difficult is the case with pedo-baptist Churches, for believing as they do that immersion, pouring and sprinkling are all valid modes of baptism, they will become as fair to immersion as they are to affusion and will put both baptisteries as well as fonts in their Churches. This will not be surrendering any conviction, such as the immersionist Churches would have to do to receive the unimmersed, but it will be keeping faith with the credal statements of pedo-baptists and with their common declaration that all three modes of baptism are valid. It would not only lessen the hostility of pedo-baptists against immersion, but would lessen the immersionists' hostility against pedo-baptist communions and, best of all, it would prevent the annual exodus from pedo-baptist communions for this sole purpose to those communions that practice baptism by immersion only, which is a condition that, think as you please, has contributed tremendously to sectarianism. The Moody Church in Chicago and Christ Church in London, both great Churches of the Congregational communion, and others have done this and use freely both the baptisteries and fonts, according as those desiring baptism understand it, and, from personal investigation, I am able to say that this broad policy has absolutely removed baptism from controversy in those Churches, but I would not have you to

understand that the acceptance of baptism by immersion alone would bring Christian union, for those bodies that practice immersion are no closer together than other communions, neither have they been able by the common practice of immersion to hold their own communions united.

No, baptism is not the crux of Christian union, but it is a Scriptural and delicate subject in the realm of formal Christianity that must be handled frankly and courteously, for the practice of the Greek Church is on one side and the Roman Catholics on the other, while the Protestants are divided over it, and to say the least a common baptism would certainly reduce friction at that point.

Neither must it be understood that a common name alone would unite the Church. It would greatly help, and especially if that name were Scriptural rather than denominational, but history has shown that divisions have been precipitated in spite of common names. As divinely tender and expressive as are the names Christian or Disciple of Christ, neither can be defined out of conformity to some doctrinal formulæ. Like the roots of these, each stands for a life, and their definition is found only in the lives of those whose love and catholicity lead them to give themselves to others, to suffer with another, to be a crutch to the stumbling and all for the sake of Christ, whose friendship is offered to every living soul.

Nor would a short credal statement alone accomplish it, however short the statement, even though it be as brief as Peter's confession or as beautiful as the so-called Apostles' Creed, for divisions have flourished under the rule of all creeds, short and long, written and unwritten. All of these will help, but no one will do it, and those who think that Christian union hinges alone upon any one of these outward ordinances or formulæ have not sounded the depths of this divine and universal problem. Neither will the combining of immersion of penitent believers, a Scriptural name for believers and a Scriptural statement of faith lead to the conquest of the world.

Truth alone will not fulfill the program of Christ, but truth and union combined form a link with the Cross and the broken tomb that becomes an irresistible force before which a pagan and unbelieving world will be convicted "in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." Neither union alone nor truth alone is sufficient; but combined, the Holy Spirit's grief will be assuaged and the power of God will become omnipotent in the lives of a ruined race, lifting it out of the sloughs of unfaith into the widening vision of a universal triumph.

To the Disciples, no other task holds priority. A united Church by the way of Christ is the only pathway that flings its lines of absolute victory among all tongues and peoples. To an-

swer that this one or that of the nine conclusions named in this lecture is of secondary importance does not satisfy the conditions, for in the eyes of the whole Christian world, each of these is of so great importance that where one dissents he is slow to yield his traditional practice to a well recognized Scriptural position, as for instance in the names of believers. Christians, Disciples of Christ, Friends and Brethren are far superior designations than the multiplicity of denominational names, some of which are still as belittling as the "Button Party" or the "Hook and Eye Party" in the early history of the Anabaptists.

Converts in pagan lands are making such loud protests against the transplanting into their countries of these divisions with their divisive names that they have gone beyond the missionaries and have affirmed that there is no place in their countries for the divisions of European and American Christianity, and so Japan has written over and above every denominational name the "United Church of Christ," as has India and other lands. There is no escape from the abolition of everything, be it little or great, that has hindered the unity of believers. Christ must triumph in His Church before He triumphs over the world.

The results of the Disciples' research is largely an attempt to disentangle the plan of salvation, around which has been so much controversy,

that all men might see its simplicity and find pardon and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Alexander Campbell's great contribution to Christendom was disentangling the facts regarding salvation from theology, although not necessarily severing them. It is only the beginning, for the heights are beyond. You may take faith, repentance and baptism, in their Scriptural order as they appear to us, but if you linger there, you will become legalists, just as emphasizing above everything else the moral teachings of Jesus would lead you into an ethical cult, or emphasizing above everything else the worship of Jesus, beautiful and stainless as it was, would lead into the coldness of formalism.

All these have their places, but they are only streamlets from the fountain. The fact that the heart pants for something beyond these is an unanswerable argument that religion is more than any one of these, more than all of these combined. These are only helps to religion; and, if we make them doctrines instead of living faith and genuine piety, we misuse them and our misuse will quickly gather about it the flavour of sectarianism.

Christian union is a vaster problem than doctrines stated even in Scriptural language. Our discoveries are but the portals through which we pass in order to attain the heights. Great obstacles lie in our way towards its consummation—

traditions that are rooted in the centuries and that are as old as Christian schism and have around them the reverence and affection of generations, when there was nothing else to lean upon because the Bible was either taken away or covered by human creeds. These traditions were the staffs upon which leaned a stumbling race, but the essential thing lies beyond traditions and formulæ. We are in a world of pathos and tragedy and God charges us to live in the sphere of brotherhood, for there is a spirituality in the divine program beyond what we have now. It cannot be produced in strife and separation. *The conscious presence of God is the normal height of the soul's attainment,* and Christian union is the pathway by which we will attain unto that abiding communion with the Unseen, for which we long and without which we shall never be satisfied.

Jesus came to blaze the way to the holiness of His inner sanctuary. There must be harmony or the music cannot be at its best. The discords of Christendom have drowned the finest strains of music in the human soul and the Disciples have attempted to clear the dust from the pages of the Scriptures that the chords of the human heart may again vibrate in perfect harmony with the heart of Christ, who is the only solution to discord in His divided house. If we have failed in this stupendous task, and God knows that many

of us have, charge it not to our discoveries, for they are Scriptural and must remain, but charge it to our human weakness of broken vision and stumbling faith.

III

Holding to the results of our research, to us there appear three necessary advances among all Christians that have priority over everything else and without which we are incompetent to even discuss the basis for the union of the Church of Christ. These are: (1) a larger fellowship, (2) a sincere defense of each other's cause, and (3) side by side prayer to each other's God for equal blessings upon the whole family of faith. Then the Bible will open its yet hidden secrets; no one of us will conquer the other; but the Holy Spirit will conquer us all and His ministry will be made glorious by our genuine penitence and deepened consecration to Jesus Christ our Lord.

First: The days of polemics have passed. Excommunications on hair-splitting interpretations belong by the side of witch burnings. It would be a poor world if every man interpreted everything exactly like the rest of men. Poetry, music, painting, flowers, trees, landscapes—all would be gone. Individuality would be lost and the wreck of the world would be greater than the Fall in Eden. Our task is to maintain fellowship with all Christians, as far as they will

let us, irrespective of their differences. Burke's conception of society was that it is a partnership in all science, in all art, in every virtue and in all perfection. Said he: "As the end of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born." If this is the high ideal of society in the conception of that brilliant Englishman, how can it be attained without the leadership of the Church and that Church a united flock? Therefore, the first step towards the union of Christendom is to find the social basis.

We quote the words of Francis of Assisi, Bernard, Savonarola, Richard Baxter, Jeremy Taylor, John Wesley and other saints, and yet if any of these were to appear, some in their mendicant robes and all of different communions, how many Protestant pulpits would be open to them and at how many communion tables could they sit with freedom? Thank God, they are dead, but the fellowship that we have with their great souls is an impulsive force moving us into a larger fellowship with the living saints of the earth and the unborn multitudes that shall give unstinted praise to our Lord. The call of Christ is to think in the sphere of the universal. To be as catholic as His Gospel and to carry a concern for others as wide as the love of God to men.

Truth has nothing to fear in mingling with unbelievers, much less with believers. It is the divine method of its transmission and it mingles better in human flesh than books. Jesus went Himself among the people and left no commentaries, but left His life, and the spirit of a message is seen in the conduct of its adherents far more than in its theological statements. Universal fellowship with the saints is the model of God, while exclusiveness is the den of provincialism and sectarianism. It cannot be true that associating with other communions destroys the truth of another. It may destroy its narrowness and shame its sectarianism, but to its truth it gives vision and vitality. He who has convictions can mingle with all Christians and retain those convictions as certainly as, mingling with the thousands on the streets, he keeps his individual name. The scourge of a message—that of the Disciples or any others that has in it the call of God—is giving to it a contracted horizon and making it provincial. It is the violation of a divine principle, for the atmosphere of provincialism is as repulsive as the musty smell of an ill-ventilated room.

Superior to its theology is the social power of the Church. The first pagan persecutions against Christians were not waged against theological tenets. What did Roman Cæsars care whether the Holy Spirit came from the Father

or from the Son? What mattered to them whether men were baptized for the remission of sins or whether the Lord's Supper was the real presence or a spiritual memorial? That which filled them with alarm was the social bond of Christians, their secret meetings and their oneness of life.

The divided Church destroyed this and society to-day is organizing itself on a non-religious basis because the Church refuses to take the lead and give a fellowship to the broken race like that for which it craves. Christian theology is merely incidental as compared with this greater demand. Farrar said: "If you do not love your brother, however tremendous the truths which you utter with your lips, your Christianity is heathendom, and the kingdom of God is not within you . . . a religion which thinks to please God either by orthodox formulæ or ceremonial observances without charity is no better than blasphemy. The throne of Christ can only be set up in the heart of man, not in his actions; in the life of man, not upon his lips." Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, said: "As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another"—not merely those of one communion loving among themselves, but those of one communion loving those of another communion.

Sin deadened the sense of love and Christ came to revive it, but sin divided the Church that love might be hindered from rising to her divine service in fulfilling the program of God, but Christ will nevertheless get the throne of universal affection and "reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet." His victory must come by the way of the universal fellowship of the saints. Discord hinders now, and one who believes in the real presence in the communion cannot worship with one who believes it to be only a spiritual memorial, one who believes in extemporaneous prayers cannot worship with one who reads his prayers, one who wears one denominational name cannot worship with one who wears another denominational name. Forgive me if you care to, but I tell you now, I tell you plainly it is all the dry-rot of sectarianism. I speak not out of theory, for I have sat with Christians of all communions and experienced the peace of God, but more, I have knelt at the altar with nearly all communions in partaking of the Lord's Supper, and I felt the sweetness and the power of its observance as much as when ministering at the altar in my own Church.

Second: The defense of another's cause antedates Christianity and is a necessary part in the consummation of the good. I do not mean to defend denominationalism—not one word in its defense, nor any subterfuge to seek to atone for

divisions by pointing to the good that each denomination has done, for all the good done by the divided Church was in spite of its divisions. A united Church would have lifted the race to greater heights and made wider conquests. Neither do I mean to defend any doctrine or practice that another believes is unscriptural. No, not for a moment; but we have tried polemics, we have maintained suspicious attitudes, we have stamped one communion and another as not in our fellowship because of practices that appear to us as unscriptural, we have pointed out the weakness of other communions, we have put our finger on their dark spots and we are still divided.

Now let us try the rule of Christ. I think that I may say here with Lessing: "Christianity has been tried for eighteen centuries, while the religion of Christ has yet to be tried." He had confidence in men, although they killed Him and tried to keep Him from rising from the dead, still He had confidence in them, and that has made for Him conquest of millions. The same rule is here to-day. Paul put it in the concrete: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." It is very simple. Do not look all the time on what your communion is doing. Look on what other communions are doing. Be interested in their progress as you are interested in the progress of your own.

One may not endorse all the practices of a member in his own communion, but if that member is attacked or misrepresented, see how kindly he looks upon what that member has done and see how quickly he goes to his defense. He offers himself as a fortress. The same spirit must be exercised by Christians towards persons of every communion, for there is none of these communions but that holds to such vital principles and that has done such sacrificing service for Christ, that any Christian who cares at all for the common good can find enough to cause him to throw himself as a defense against any attacks or misrepresentations as though it were his own communion. In this way denominational friendships are formed and progress marked beyond any other plan, for it is the rule of Christ and weakens denominationalism, while to do otherwise is sectarianism and hardens the walls of separation. This does not close friendly controversy; but, on the other hand, it disarms bitterness and opens the way to friendly comparison of differences, by which peace is far more likely to be attained than by any other course. It gives a new meaning to the ninth commandment, which has been so constantly and inexcusably abused by Christians in their bearing false witness against other communions and attempting to justify their own.

I sometimes wonder whether the harm done

by our denominational literature is not far in excess of the good that it accomplishes. I doubt if there is any other one thing that is so great a hindrance to the union of Christendom. If not bigoted and selfish, it is, to say the least, necessarily so unfair. It narrows the horizon of believers and leads those of that communion to think that theirs is the only religion in the world, and sometimes it may be as appropriately said to them as Constantine said to Acesius to go and find a ladder and go to heaven by himself.

Take the denominational journals, and I include the Disciples as well as others, and in this respect we are perhaps sinners above many. The denominational journals, with very rare exceptions, are provincial, pathetically so if not sacrilegiously so. One who reads the literature of no other communion than his own would think that the chief religious work being done in the world was that of his communion, that the leading religious forces in New York, London or Tokio were confined to the activities of that communion. It is a false view of Christianity and the service for which it stands. The day is dawning when denominational journals and denominational colleges shall be relegated to museums by the side of fossils of bygone ages, and God hasten the coming of that day! Fifteen centuries ago Jerome said: "Christ is not so poor as to have only a Church in Sardinia." No.

Christ is not so poor as to have only that little centre of congregations represented by some one communion in this city or that. What, has He no followers among the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Disciples and other communions in those cities? They are all His, equally precious in His sight, and He waits for us to be brethren among ourselves, in order that the world may believe that He has been sent from the Father. Said Fairbairn: "That man who says, 'There is a God, but He is for me and not for you,' is a worse infidel than the man who says, 'There is no God.'"

Sectarianism is a subtle infidelity that is unconsciously stealing the faith of the Church. Neither shibboleths nor anything else, causing one Christian to be separated from another, will make us Christians. "These shall slip away into white ashes in the revealing and consuming flame," but Christ alone is the soul's Saviour, and faith in Him and obedience to Him is the sum and substance of life—obedience to look "not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"—others who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This rule of Christ was to give us a wide sky and make us to see that others are struggling for the same lofty heights that we are.

Third: A side by side work for saving men to

Christ is a practical step towards Christian union. On the foreign mission field, Christians are closer together than in the home land and would be still closer, if the influence of the home land was not so strong in keeping them apart. Livingstone said: "All classes of Christians find that sectarian rancour soon dies out, when they are working together among and for the real heathen."

But it is the side by side upward look that is of double force. Theological differences are forgotten when souls are really burdened before the Throne of grace. Christ has given us something to do, and who cares whether the Throne is reached through the petition of a Baptist or a Presbyterian or an Episcopalian or a Disciple? He must have been a Christian or Christ would not have heard him. For some years I have been reading every day a prayer from that exquisite little book—"Great Souls at Prayer"—and sometimes it is Augustine or Rosetti or Martineau or Pusey or Kempis or Stevenson or Newman or Collyer or Matheson—and a prayer by David or some nameless Hebrew poet—I have not cared from whom, but they were souls that found the altar, and out of their thoughts my approach was made easier and we were fellows at the Throne of pardon and peace, where there is known no sect nor party. The message of the Disciples is to make everywhere the altar

of God, without separation or discord in a fellowship that shall be satisfied with nothing less than a conquered world for a conquering Christ.

If the Disciples have not kept faith with the practicing of these three fundamental principles, it is not only to our discredit, but is inexcusable indifference to the principles of our origin and a rude rebuff to those servants whom the Lord appears to have called to proclaim the way of peace in His divided house, for this Restoration movement arose as a protest against strictures on the practice of a larger and more brotherly fellowship. We are at home in assemblies of Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Lutherans, and every other communion that makes for its corner-stone the Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus, for they all are our brethren. Our protest is against breaking the fellowship that now exists and our appeal to Christendom is to deepen the love in the brotherhood of Christ until "we have made a bonfire of our prejudices and fanned it with the flame of our sacrifices."

The message of the Disciples has nothing to do with theology so far as making that theology or any other a test of fellowship. Its message is practical rather than doctrinal. It looks out from under the prayer of Jesus for the conquest of the world for Christ. The great concern in His last hours on earth was the possible schism among

His followers, dividing them into separate bodies. It cast a shadow over His prayer along with the heavy shadow of the Cross. The fact is here and now and gives grief to the Holy Spirit. It is the paramount issue, and not upon the Disciples alone, but upon all Christians, is the obligation to lend their faith and love and prayers to this purpose. These principles shine like stars in the sky and the walls of separation will go down—I know not when nor how—but they will go down as sure as God is God.

The whole world of thought has moved into new channels. Years ago, it was believed that the earth was the centre of the universe. "Up" was heaven and "down" was hell, but it is not so to-day. Up at one hour will take you in one direction and six hours later will take you in a very different direction. Copernicus made new paths for our thinking, for now it is proven that the sun is the centre of the solar system and that there are other worlds far greater than ours that revolve around it, while our orb has shrunk into very little importance in that vast system.

It is becoming so in the affairs of Christianity. Christ and Christ alone is the centre and sovereign of all religion, and obedience to Him and to Him alone is the one true test of loyalty. Others in and out of the communion of the Disciples have caught the vision as Kepler, Galileo and Newton elaborated on the calculations of

Copernicus. The movement is Christward and all our communions—yours and mine—will gradually sink in importance as Christ ascends in conquest over us and the world for which He died, until it shall be seen that He is, as He has always been, in the meridian. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever." Amen.

Oh, Thou Father of love, permit us to join Thy league of pity. Then let us be ministers to each other irrespective of our creeds or communions. We need their ministry; they need ours; and Thou art needing our combined ministries for the conquest of the world. Send us, O Lord, into closer fellowship with our brothers of other folds. Scourge all vainglory and bigotry out of our hearts and make us the true lovers of all who love Thee. Set us to be real helpers in the consummation of all Thy program and grant that we may hear our souls saying, "Not my will, but Thine, be done"—and saying it so loud that all our conduct shall be regulated by our soul's inner cry. Then we shall feel in our hearts that the league of pity is the great fellowship of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

LECTURE TWO

The Origin of the Disciples of Christ

AMONG all the facts of human history, Christianity stands alone in its incomparable strength and fadeless beauty. It is the life of God in the souls of men. Other religions have come and either are gone or are going. The memory of Osiris and Isis lingers only amid the tombstones of a dead empire. The divinity of Jupiter, Mars and Venus has crumbled like the ruins of their long ago deserted temples and their names astronomers have given to the stars. Buddhism, Brahmanism, Parseeism and Mohammedanism, although still exercising powerful influences upon the heathen nations, are slowly decaying and the Tripitaka, the Vedas, the Avesta and the Koran are the sacred books of dying faiths. These ethnic religions and those akin to them are the dim and flickering lamps lighted at God's altar, but Christianity is the one lamp of God that burns unto the perfect day.

Its source is Jesus Christ. He is the greatest fact of history and the New Testament is distinctly His book. The Gospels are the records of His life, including the fulfillment of the Old

Testament prophecies concerning Him. The Acts is the history of the first thirty years of His Church. The Epistles contain the philosophy of His religion and the Apocalypse is the prophecy of its triumph.

Reaching back through nineteen hundred years, Christianity presents a fascinating but sometimes disheartening history, which is marked by faith and sacrifice, heroism and conquest, discord and division, defeat and failure, holiness and prayer, freedom and progress, ignorance and prejudice, surprises and paradoxes, friendship and service, vision and hope—a history like that in the days of the apostles, which, in spite of the imperfect and unworthy material, reveals the production of a nobility of character, which was unknown until after the time of Christ, and which now stands in the history of the world like a chain of mountains across a continent. The Church of the apostles, like the Church of the twentieth century, had its defects and problems. Christianity is a world task and the transforming of mankind out of the wreck of countless years into the likeness of Christ cannot be accomplished in a decade or a century, any more than seeds planted in a night will grow into giant trees in the light of a single day. The redemption of the world has heaven and earth back of it and the throb beats of God are now felt in the bosom of all nations as never before.

I

Movements and counter-movements have arisen in the pale of Christianity and have taken their courses like currents in the sea, while the mighty tides for the world's redemption are steadily moving up to the Throne of God. Any one of these movements is a history in itself. Their leaders were noble souls, for no one calls another to holiness in the name of Jesus Christ, but he may be enrolled among the saints and before his memory we pay our offering at the altar of human affection and stand in the shadow of that memory with unsandalled feet. It is pertinent to inquire into the origin of these movements, and this lecture is an inquiry into the origin of the Christian union movement of the nineteenth century known as the Restoration movement, whose advocates called themselves Disciples of Christ or Christians, and whose Churches are known as Christian Churches, or Churches of Christ, and occasionally Churches of the Disciples of Christ and rarely Disciples' Church.

All movements have their antecedents, as naturally as back of flower blossoms are seeds. Ideas like all living things grow. They have their antecedents and their blossoms in full bloom. Pythagoras was the forerunner of Copernicus, while the maturity of the Copernican idea belongs to Kepler, Galileo and Newton.

Cimabue and Giotto were the pioneers in art and made possible the achievements of Raphael, Michelangelo and others who put their impressions of religion and history on canvas and in marble. So of Palladio. He was the forerunner of all modern architecture. Before Luther, Zwingli and Calvin were Wyclif, Huss and Savonarola. The antecedents of the Campbells were not only the Reformers of the sixteenth century and their successors, and the Waldenses before them all, but especially Calixtus, Grotius, Coccejus, Baxter, Locke and all those who yearned for the union of the house of God. For more than a century in Europe, as well as for a less period in America, indications directly foreshadowed the movement of the Disciples of Christ. The symptoms were felt by the far visioned on both continents and the culmination into a distinct movement for the union of Christendom was as natural as a flower bursting its calyx. Its research opens a most interesting and fascinating field of study.

Christianity started from Jesus Christ—not from theories about Him, but from the fact of Him. Out of His Sonship and Messiahship, He said to Peter: "Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He is the Alpha and the Omega, and, for salvation, the heart must link itself to

Him by living faith, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The door of the world's hope had been flung wide open and the Church was established upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. The promise had been fulfilled. The Holy Spirit had entered upon the divine mission of convicting men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, and sanctifying them to God the Father.

It was a dark period in the world's history, for unpunished crime was the affair of every day in all circles. Both pagan priests and pagan peoples were corrupt. Judaism had well-nigh been wrecked by warring sects, while Idumean princes and Roman procurators ruled in Jerusalem. To the casual observer, it looked as though all paths had been wiped out, while despair had grimly settled upon the face of mankind. In the midst of this gloom, Christianity lifts the clouds and gives to the lost race the vision of hope. The new day had come and the Sun of Righteousness was rising with healing under His wings.

But the progress of Christianity was by no means an easy advance. The world had crucified Christ and it now contested the right of His religion to live. The Jews sought to hush the voice of Christian faith by bitterly denying the testimony that Jesus is the Christ. Paganism

drove the believers to martyrdom. Celsus and Porphyry attempted to overthrow Christianity by the brilliancy of their philosophies and, while Julian issued no formal edict, he encouraged schism and strife among Christians, pagan as he was but knowing its power to poison every good; and further, he planned to smother it in ignorance by forbidding Christians to teach the classics or to be taught them, believing that Christianity could not exist without the classic basis, but the legendary cry of Julian: "Thou, O Galilean, hast conquered after all," was true, for out of every conflict Christianity emerged stronger than ever, so that only a few years before Tertullian had said: "We are of yesterday, yet we have filled your empire, your cities, your islands, your castles, your towns, your assemblies, your very camps, your tribes, your companies, your palaces, your senate. Your forum and your temples alone are left you."

Those early centuries were great periods in the history of Christianity. The Old Testament was at first the only Bible that the Christians had. Then gradually came the New Testament, one book at a time, an epistle to one Church, which was passed to another, then another epistle, then a biography of Jesus, and another, until the twenty-seven books were written. On the death of the last apostle, the manuscripts were copied and separately passed from one Church to another,

as among the richest heritages of their faith. Not until the latter part of the fourth century were they formally combined into one volume as we now have the New Testament; but the Church of those centuries, with all its defects, and they were many, was close to the apostles and under the shadow of the Cross. Traditions were passed from one to another as friends tell their heart secrets to each other, while an unfettered faith was rapidly transforming the classic students of Rome and Athens into disciples of Jesus and the uncouth pagans into saints. Thousands went to martyrdom for their faith, while other thousands told the story of Jesus and the resurrection until the Church had set up her banners in all parts of the Roman empire.

The leaders in those days were no ordinary men. They appear to have been divinely set apart as the real princes of the earth and, in these latter days, all the divisions of Christendom claim them as their own. Irenæus, Clement, Origen and Tertullian belong to all communions whether Greek, Roman Catholic or Protestant. From Augustine the Roman Catholic Church got its imperialism and mysticism, while Augustine gave Luther his first awakening on justification by faith, and of him Luther said: "Next after the Holy Scriptures, no teacher in the Church is to be compared to Augustine." From Augustine Calvin got his doctrine of predestination. It is

true that none of these fathers were members of any of the modern communions, because no one of these communions then existed, but now all struggle to hold in their fellowship the mighty souls of the first centuries and talk about them as though they were their brothers, as indeed they are. However widely separated we may be from living souls by different creeds, when we thread our way back through the centuries, all our lines lead to those paths of the first centuries wherein stand the same great personalities, and back of all is Christ, whose we are and whom we serve.

Since these lines converge to a common centre in the past and that centre was Christ, they must be God's paths, and hence they must likewise converge to a common centre in the future and that centre likewise is Christ, who "shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." That deflection, that break in brotherhood, that multiplicity of denominations, that hostility among Christians—all these, along with every other sin, shall be cured by the power of Jesus Christ who alone has the cure for all souls.

In the shadow of His passion, when the very atmosphere was heavy with sympathetic tears, He prayed: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also

may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." The redemption of the world, which was the task to which He had given His life, lay in the path of a united discipleship, while every division added canker to the divine escutcheon and tarnished the badge of Christian brotherhood. Paul saw in the unveiled bosom of Christ the program of His conquest and so he wrote to the Church at Ephesus: "Walk worthily of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

As deep as the mystery of sin is the mystery of the divided Church. Its coming seemed as inevitable as the Fall of man. Departure from apostolic simplicity and practice, incorporation of pagan customs and rites, diversified interpretations of the Scriptures and traditions and the growth of worldliness in the Church brought about conditions that broke the unity of the flock of God and henceforth Church history deals with separate communions, rather than with a united Church, as in the early years.

Although the Roman Catholic Church is the

largest Christian communion with a history reaching back to the eleventh century, if we count from the time that the pope was excommunicated by the patriarch of Constantinople, or to 606, when Boniface was called the "universal father" by the Emperor Phocas, or perhaps to 440–461, in the time of Leo I, who is sometimes called the first of the popes; nevertheless, to the Greek Church belongs the priority as being the oldest of the Christian communions, whose origin, like that of the Roman Catholics, is well-nigh lost in those centuries when the Church began her departure from apostolic simplicity, but for the first two hundred years Greek was the prevailing tongue of the Church, even in Rome itself.

As far back as the early part of the third century, however, the Roman primacy came into discussion, against which Irenæus, Origen and the whole Eastern Church severely protested, but the trend in religion, like that of the government, was towards centralization. Minor sects arose and disappeared, but these two great movements—the Eastern and Western Churches —continued to advance with intense hostility against each other, until 1054, when the absolute schism occurred by the patriarch of Constantinople excommunicating the pope, whose authority was becoming recognized in the whole Western Church, and to even up matters, the pope excommunicated the patriarch, so that both com-

munions are under the ban of excommunication. Henceforth, they are known in history as the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches.

On the decadence of the Roman empire, the Western Church arose to power, and for centuries it was the dominating influence in Europe. Gregory the Great, who refused the title of pope, paved the way for the culmination of complete union of Church and State, with the papacy above the dignity of European thrones. Drunk with the love of power and wealth, the Roman Catholic Church sank into anarchy and sin, in the midst of which Bernard of the twelfth century exclaimed: "Who will grant me, before I die, to see the Church of God, such as she has been in the primitive times?" Things were stagnant as the atmosphere sometimes is before a storm. The Western Church became so corrupt that nothing could hold up the falling fabric except a long desired Reformation, which was led by Martin Luther outside the Church and by Ignatius Loyola within the Church, both conscientious Christian men, contending for the right as they saw it. Out of this mighty struggle, which shook all Europe like an earthquake, came the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, and another chapter was opened in the history of the divisions of Christianity.

In the principles of Protestantism, which are justification by faith, the sole authority of the

Scriptures and the right of private interpretation, a long step was taken towards the primitive Gospel. Protestantism, however, was too close to the intolerance of the Roman Catholic Church to fully maintain these principles and, at the Marburg Conference in 1529, fourteen and a half of the fifteen propositions were accepted by the leaders; but, on Zwingli interpreting "*hoc est meum corpus*" as signifying the spiritual presence and not the literal body, which was Luther's interpretation, Luther refused to shake hands with him, although Zwingli offered to compromise, but Zwingli's abruptness of manner and giving his support to some of Luther's enemies had prepared the way for the break. Likewise Luther broke fellowship with his Anabaptist followers, Carlstadt and Munzer. Calvin's intolerance went further and, like James and John, who wanted to call down fire upon the Samaritans, his theologic hatred of opposition carried him so far as to send Servetus to the stake because he severely differed with him. In the establishing of religious peace in Germany in 1555, tolerance was granted to the Lutherans and under restricted conditions to the Roman Catholics, but no toleration was granted to dissenting Protestants.

In order to cope with the system of dogmatic theology of the Roman Catholic Church, Protestantism established its own systems of dog-

matic theology and required unstinted loyalty to its tenets by all who sought entrance into its different fellowships. In denying the right of private interpretation, which is one of the fundamental principles of Protestantism, division was precipitated in the Protestant household, so that instead of one Protestant Church, there were Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Congregational communions and, in many instances, there was a more bitter hostility between these than against the Roman Catholic Church.

The seventeenth century was a period of bitter and incessant strife in religious matters and for a time it seemed as though Protestantism would destroy itself by strife and multiplicity of division, for most of the larger communions were dividing and subdividing over such hair-splitting interpretations and trifling questions of polity, that the Roman Catholic orator Bossuet exclaimed: "Great God! Is it possible that, upon the same matters and the same questions, so many multiplied acts, so many divisions and different confessions of faith are necessary? . . . These variations fill us with astonishment." In his two-volumed work, "History of the Variations of Protestant Churches," he predicted under the continuation of that policy a complete disintegration and disappearance of the entire Protestant movement. It was the

identical policy by which Julian thought to destroy Christianity in the fourth century, and now the amazement was that, without any outside instigation, Protestantism had itself adopted the policy for its ruin. It was a critical period and deep concern filled the minds of Protestants.

Zwingli and Melancthon, both of irenic spirit, appear to have been more keenly sensitive to the necessity of union than any of their associates. Calvin, however, wrote Cranmer in 1553: "I should not hesitate to cross ten seas, if by this means holy communion might prevail among the members of Christ." George Calixtus, professor in the university of Halmstadt and the pioneer in this cause, wrote a letter in gentleness and love to the Roman Catholic universities of Germany, pleading for the things that make for peace. He said: "If I may but help towards the healing of our schisms, I will shrink from no cares and night watchings, no efforts and no dangers . . . nay, I will never spare either my life nor my blood, if so be I may purchase the peace of the Church." To him the summary of the minimum, which is required for salvation, is expressed in the Apostles' Creed, and on that basis he appealed to the divided Church, but it fell on deaf ears, save to be denounced and ridiculed.

Hugo Grotius lent his great intellect to an attempt at union between Catholics and Protestants. Leibnitz and Bossuet conducted a lengthy

correspondence in the same interest. Failing in this, Leibnitz turned his attention to a reconciliation between the Lutheran and Reformed communions, which likewise failed. Dury's scheme for the union of all Protestants by the abolition of party names and bitter controversies and the establishment of national Churches, attracted some attention, but the death of his chief patron, Gustavus Adolphus, cut it short. The conference of Thorn, composed of twenty-seven Roman Catholics, thirty-seven Lutherans and fifteen from the Reformed Church, presided over by a legate appointed by the emperor, assembled in great pomp instead of much prayer and, after lasting for months, it broke up in scandal. In correspondence with William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, Dupin proposed as a basis for union between the Church of Rome and the Church of England the abolition of auricular confession, religious vows, Lenten fasts and abstinence, pope's supremacy and celibacy of the clergy; he also entered into negotiations through Peter the Great, while that sovereign was in France, with a similar plan for the union of the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, but Pope Clement XI severely censured him and Louis XIV dismissed him from among the doctors of the Sorbonne.

While these things were transpiring on the continent, similar efforts were being put forth in England and Scotland. Among the chief voices

of that day was that of Richard Baxter, who preached constantly on the necessity of a united Church and wrote numerous pamphlets in its behalf. Said he: "Unity and concord is the Church's beauty. It makes us amiable even to the eyes of nature and venerable and terrible even to the eyes of malice. . . . The concord of believers does greatly conduce to the success of the ministry and the propagation of the Gospel and the conviction and salvation of ungodly souls." Continuing he said: "When Christ prayed for the unity of His disciples, He redoubled His argument from the effect or end (that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me and hath loved them). Would this make the world believe that Christ was sent of God? Yes, undoubtedly. If all Christians were reduced to a holy concord it would do more to win the heathen world than all other means can do without it."

Other issues, however, always overshadowed in importance the union of believers. The place of doctrine had priority over Christian life, yet love among believers is as fundamental in the religion of Jesus as faith in His divinity. Edward Stillingfleet, afterwards Bishop of Worcester, wrote his "Irenicum," in which he sought to express the prevailing weariness relative to the faction between episcopacy and Presbyterianism and sought to find some compromise on which all could unite, although he looked upon the form

of Church government as a non-essential. Said he: "For the Church to require more than Christ Himself did, or make the condition of her communion more than our Saviour did of discipleship, is wholly unwarranted." In 1662 he gave a reprint of his "Irenicum" with an appendix, in which he sought to prove that "the Church is a distinct society from the State and has divers rights and privileges of its own." That year the Act of Uniformity was passed and Puritanism was thrust out of the Church of England. Stillingfleet's position aided many of the ejected ministers, and John Owen, chief among the Puritans in his day, said: "Wherever there is a man or a body of men, who are united to Him by a living faith and are keeping His commandments, he or they are in communion with the Church of God." With prophet vision he added: "When God shall accomplish union it will be the effect of love and not the cause of love."

Chillingworth insisted on a return to the Bible and, dying in prison in consequence of his faith, he said: "Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men for not subscribing to the words of men, as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe in Christ and to call no man master but Him only." The phrase coined by Rupertus Meldinius was on the lips of many: "In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things charity." John Milton, poet and states-

man, fearlessly pleaded for the restoration of New Testament Christianity as the only cure for the divisions of Christendom. Johannes Coccejus, the scholar; John Wesley, the reformer; Jeremy Taylor, the preacher; John Locke, the philosopher, and others were pleading for the recognition of brotherhood among Christians, while a belligerent sectarianism was trying to strangle it to death.

Systems of dogmatic theology having failed to furnish a basis for union, two opposite movements arose in the seventeenth century, both seeking to get away from sectarianism and find a basis of unity, which is somewhere, for the human mind seeks it. The first was a series of mystical movements, which substituted for theological dogmatism the emotional element of our nature as the sole criterion of religion. Out of this reaction came the Methodists, the Friends, the Moravians, and other kindred movements in both Protestant and Roman Catholic communions, causing a general revival of religion, and leaving the names of John Wesley, George Whitefield, Madam Guyon, Fenelon, Fox and Zinzendorf among their leaders, but it contributed little to the solution of the union problem. Wesley, however, said: "Would to God that all the party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world, were forgot; and that we might all agree to sit

down together, as humble, loving disciples at the feet of our common Master, to hear His word, to imbibe His Spirit, and to transcribe His life in our own."

The other movement had to do with the philosophy of Empiricism, which, excluding the element of revelation, and affirming that all knowledge is derived from the senses or the perception of simple historical fact, sought through the universal reason of mankind to establish a universal Christianity and, though it ended in disaster, it served to break up conditions preparatory to the reconstruction of thought.

The Campbells faced these conditions and awoke to the defects of our inner artistry and fearlessly set themselves to reducing sectarian chaos into the harmony of a united brotherhood. They saw the disproportion of religion in one communion, emphasizing one doctrine as though that were the sum of Christianity and another communion emphasizing another doctrine, as though it were the sum of Christianity, necessarily giving the preponderance of one element in one communion and almost the entire lack of it in another, while all communions should be equally emphasizing the great necessities of our common faith, if human life would be proportioned after the model of Christ. They saw that the religion that is to survive is not to produce ecclesiastical disproportionments, but is dis-

tinctly the religion of proportion, according to each faculty its full right, so they proposed for the union of Christendom neither a system of dogmatic theology, nor a religion of pure feeling, nor a philosophy based on universal reason; but *to unite upon the fact of Christ*—His authority over against all other authorities and obedience to His terms as laid down in the New Testament.

They did not propose to make their interpretation of the Bible, nor any other interpretation of the Bible, as a test of fellowship, but the Bible was to be taken as the authority for what Christ wanted men to do and, having decided that, the interpretation of the facts, as for instance the interpretation regarding faith, repentance and baptism, were matters of private judgment, which belong to theology and consequently have no place in determining Christian fellowship.

The Campbells had pushed their way to the ultimate conclusion of Protestantism, which was expressed in the phrase of Chillingworth: "The Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants." And further, in this proposition, they presented the reconciliation of the individual liberty of conscience and intellect with the solidarity of Christian discipleship, for which Christ prayed. Up through the storms of centuries, the plant had come and in the opening of the nineteenth century it bloomed and a

new chapter for the union of Christendom was opened in the annals of American Christianity

II

I know not where to find all the seeds that have flowered in this garden, for nothing is more difficult than to trace the origin of things, but inasmuch as the message of the Disciples of Christ was for an intelligent understanding of the Scriptures, freed from all traditions and superstitions, the Renaissance became one of its earliest antecedents. It was the morning of the awakening. It made possible the sixteenth century Reformation and gave to literature and art a new impetus, so that untrammelled genius made its offering of poetry and sculpture and painting at the altar of freedom. All life felt the influence of the awakening and theological, philosophical and political thoughts changed their channels and gradually sought adjustment to a larger freedom. Men unconsciously found themselves in new conditions and bravely sought for paths, the prophecies of which were already beating in their bosoms, and so out of the Renaissance came an intellectual awakening that flashed its beams upon souls whose passion was being turned to an intelligent harmonizing of the discord in the divided house of God.

While the attention of all Europe was being at-

tracted to the Netherlands by Hugo Grotius, who was laying the foundation of the new science of international law, and by Rembrandt, whose original style of painting based upon a strong perception of the beauty and value of pure light and shade in nature and art, reaching its climax in the wonderful picture, "The Night Watch,"— while these brilliant achievements were attracting the admiration of Europe to the Netherlands, Johannes Coccejus, the pious and learned professor in the university of Leyden, was making the first attempt at systematic, Biblical theology and laying down new rules for the interpretation of the Scriptures, by which he came to be called "the father of modern exegesis." The restlessness of the age bespoke a desire for new systems of thought. Over against the Roman Catholic proposition of saving all, irrespective of their condition, who at the time of their death are in the membership of that Church, Calvin set his dogma of predestination, which declared that the divine decrees are eternal and unchangeable and that a part of the human race, without any merit of their own, are chosen to eternal life, and the other part, as just punishment for their sins, are left to eternal damnation.

Many movements arose seeking the mitigation of this harsh doctrine, the negative counterpart of which was not satisfactory even to Calvin, but he affirmed that it was logically true. The

most formidable revolt was led by James Arminius, professor in the university of Leyden, who advocated universal grace and freedom of the will, but Arminianism was after all a modified predestination, for it declared that God has decreed to save those who, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, believe in Jesus Christ, thereby leaving the sinner to importune the Spirit for action, but it showed clearly that there was a man-ward side in the progress of salvation and the doctrine spread rapidly, producing great effect in the history of modern ethics.

Coccejus broke with the orthodox custom of his time in reading dogmas into texts and interpreting Scripture by tradition, allegory and symbolism and, getting his ideas from the Bible and the political conditions that surrounded him, he proposed the historical method of Bible study, inquiring into the circumstances and the time of writing each book and that the meaning of a word be ascertained from the ordinary sense in connection with the context; and further, that God's dealing with man has been a development, marked by dispensations, and that salvation is a covenant between God and man, in which God and man coöperate; God being the Sovereign, it is His part to present the terms and it is man's part to accept on his own free will. The distinction between the dispensations was the key to Scriptural interpretation. All this seems very

simple to us now, but in the seventeenth century it was nothing less than revolutionary, for it upset all the systems of dogmatic theology and meant that proof texts could not be gotten at random from any part of the Bible to enforce Christian doctrines.

At first it was kindly received due to the friendliness it showed in attempting to interpret some of the Calvinistic doctrines, rather than opposing them and too, largely to the irenic nature of the adherents, who were recognized as peace loving men, devoutly seeking to harmonize the various schools of theology and thereby find a basis for union. Hyperius, Olevian, Elgin and others were pioneers in the suggestion and following Coccejus, Burman, Witsius and others elaborated it, especially Witsius, to whom appears to be largely due its spread. When, however, it became fully understood, it caused a storm. Schism in the Reformed Church was averted only by the compromise to make it a school of theological thought and Coccejus's works, remaining in Latin, became known only to those of liberal education. The doctrine spread, however, and not being the theology of a sect, its unconscious influence affected the thought of many in all communions.

The secession from the Established Church of Scotland in 1732, under the leadership of the Erskines, included in its theology the cardinal

principles of the covenant theology and "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," by Edward Fisher and "The Fourfold State," by Thomas Boston, which clearly embodied these principles, were among the most popular books read by Seceders. The Campbells were members of that branch of the Presbyterian Church and lived in the atmosphere of the covenant theology. Thomas was educated at one of the Seceder theological seminaries, where Herman Witsius's "Economy of the Covenant Between God and Man" was a text-book, and the biographer of Alexander tells us that, when a boy, he read with eagerness Boston's "Fourfold State," which was as popular as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress"; besides both father and son were men of wide scholarship and were abreast of the times in all matters regarding theology and philosophy.

Differing in minor points with Coccejus, Alexander Campbell made lengthy quotations from him in his publications, and whether consciously or unconsciously, he followed the leadership of the distinguished Dutch theologian in his plan of the development, recognizing the Patriarchal, Jewish and Christian dispensations, which he called the starlight, moonlight and sunlight ages of the world. His famous sermon on the Law was a contrast between the Old and New Testament based on the dispensations with the cleavage at Christ, rather than at the Fall, as Coccejus put

it, and he argued for the Christian's freedom from the Old Testament law, which was designed for the Jews to whom it had been given, and the Christian's obligation to the New Testament, which contains the words of Christ for the rule of Christian life. To him the sole authority of Christ is the ultimate basis for the union of Christendom.

He further used the idea of the covenant with wonderful force in answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" and, showing what God had done for us, he proceeded with equal clearness to show that man has something to do to be saved. To the unbeliever, his answer was in Paul's words to the unbelieving jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." To the believing multitudes he answered as Peter did on the day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." To the penitent and praying believer, he answered as Ananias did to Saul: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Campbell simplified the matter of salvation, showing that there were facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed and promises to be enjoined, so that any one of ordinary intelligence could comprehend it. This was distinctly Bible ground without the interpretation of these Scrip-

tural passages being made a test of fellowship and as such, to Alexander Campbell and his associates, it furnished a reasonable basis for the coöperation of all Christians in the salvation of the lost world. Neither Coccejus nor Witsius appeared to have seen the conclusion to which Campbell had pushed the covenant idea, but the conclusion is irresistible and the covenant was made so simple that it has had much to do with the remarkable growth of the Disciples.

Another influence equally as great as an antecedent force in the rise of the Disciples, and upon Alexander Campbell in particular, was the philosophy of John Locke, of England, whose desire was to end sectarian strife by finding a philosophical basis for union and, for several generations, his thought was the prevailing philosophy in the English-speaking world, although not applied so specifically to religious conditions as has been done by the Disciples. He affirmed that all knowledge comes from without and is dependent upon our senses and the operation of the mind, which we call reflection. Of belief he affirmed that it was the acceptance of the testimony of others. In matters of God, the evidence is revelation and the assent is faith, which is set over against reason in exercise upon the objects of natural sense, but faith must not contradict reason, and so he affirmed the complete reasonableness of revelation.

With the Lockean theory of knowledge, Campbell and his colabourers declared both unscriptural and unwarrantable the eighteenth century conception of conversion, with "the idea of physical or special interpositions of God's Holy Spirit in the way of dreams, visions, voices, and immediate impulses, issuing in swoonings, faintings, jerkings, shoutings and trances." Instead of urging sinners to pray for the Holy Spirit's action upon them, they boldly presented to men —not theology, but the facts concerning Jesus Christ, that they might believe on Him, for faith was based on testimony; as Paul says, "Faith cometh by hearing." So the intellectual and moral order is first the word spoken, second hearing, third believing, fourth feeling and fifth doing.

The test of the faith of those inquiring the way of salvation is the public confession that "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God," which Locke made the thesis of his book on "The Reasonableness of Christianity." It was the philosophy of common sense and its effect was tremendous upon the multitudes who were seeking the way out of the abstractness of the religious practices of those times. With their Bibles and Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," the pioneer preachers among the Disciples went forth proclaiming the Gospel. Campbell acknowledged his debt of gratitude to Locke, whom he referred to as "the Christian philosopher"

and named him by the side of Paul, Peter, Wyclif, Luther, Milton, Newton, Franklin and Washington and used his philosophy with unanswerable force in the early years of the nineteenth century as a guide-post back to the Scriptures for the way of Christian harmony.

A number of events in political affairs transpired in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that led men of thought to reflect upon religious conditions. While Coccejus was outlining his covenant theology for the peace of Christendom, Hugo Grotius, the ablest jurist of his time, was laying down the principles for peace among nations. In his book, "The Rights of War and Peace," which became one of the most popular publications in Europe, he urged the social contract among nations by which the horrors of war might be mitigated and international controversies settled in an international court. It was out of this vision that Tennyson wrote:

"Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe.
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."

To the Campbells it gave not only the vision of the peace of the nations, but also of the Church,

which had been purchased by the blood of Christ.

Then came the American Revolution, with its significant and remarkably phrased Declaration of Independence, voicing the sentiments of a century's struggle for freedom, and the atmosphere of a new democracy swept across the continent. Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor of Catholicism, had announced the distinction between moral and positive precepts, but it remained for Grotius to bring it into perfect clearness, in which he showed that moral precepts are inherent in the human mind and that positive precepts arise out of new conditions and new authorities, from which Campbell urged with force absolute obedience to the commands of Christ as the sovereign authority of Christendom. The Revolutionary War had somewhat loosened the American nation away from the traditions of the old world and the new republic invited freedom of effort in search for primitive practices, so that the democracy of the Disciples grew up as naturally on the American soil as the Roman Catholic Church arose upon the imperialism of decadent Rome and the creeds of Protestantism by the side of the monarchies of Europe

These great currents—theological, philosophical and political—were felt on both sides of the Atlantic, sometimes singly and sometimes combined, in the general reconstruction of theological

thought, both by those who remained in the fellowship of their communions and by those who broke away from the various established religious orders.

III

Various movements looking to larger liberty in the Church arose. Because of the radical opposition of John Glas to the union of Church and State, the Church of Scotland deposed him from its ministry and, in 1728, he began an independent movement in Dundee, but remained a strict Calvinist and his work was continued by his son-in-law, Robert Sandeman.

The secession of 1732 was a protest against the secular aristocracy controlling the affairs of the Church of Scotland. Ebenezer Erskine was censured by the Assembly for his championship of the protest and, with others, he was suspended from the ministry, which resulted in the evangelical party seceding from the Church of Scotland and became the Seceder Presbyterian Church.

In 1767, Archibald McLean led a small following out of the Church of Scotland. They practiced immersion, observed the Lord's Supper weekly and were called Scotch Baptists, although they had no connection with the English Baptists.

From the influence of the great revivals under Wesley and Whitefield in England and the foreign missionary awakening under Carey and

Fuller, arose a movement in the Church of Scotland with Robert and James A. Haldane, two wealthy laymen of Edinburgh, as leaders and, on the opposition of the Church of Scotland to lay preaching, that movement became independent and, like the others, it was sincerely seeking for New Testament simplicity.

Without knowledge of each other, local congregations began to spring up in England, Scotland and Ireland and also on this side of the Atlantic, in New York, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and other cities. Some were from the Scotch Baptists, others from the Haldanes, and still others independent of all movements, but all were committed to the New Testament as the only standard of faith and practice.

In opposition to the episcopacy of the Methodist Church, James O'Kelly led a revolt from that communion in 1792 in Virginia and North Carolina, while Abner Jones, in 1800, was leading a revolt from the Baptist Church in New England against human creeds and denominational names. These two movements took the name Christian and later they received some additions from the Christian movement in Kentucky and other Western states and formed what is now known as the Christian denomination.

In 1801, Barton W. Stone held a great revival meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in which persons of other communions assisted, and for this

censure came upon him and those associated with him from the Lexington Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of which he was a member. Considerable feeling was aroused and for peace Stone and those associated with him withdrew from the Lexington Presbytery and organized the Springfield Presbytery. "But," said he, "we had not worn our name more than a year, before we saw that it savoured of a party spirit with man-made creeds. We threw it overboard and took the name Christian—the name given to the disciples by divine appointment first at Antioch." In 1804, he wrote the "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery," and, with no desire to form another communion, they started a movement, as they expressed it, "to sink into union with the body of Christ at large" and took the Bible as their rule of faith and practice.

Because of inviting all Christians to the observance of the Lord's Supper in Washington County, Pennsylvania, Thomas Campbell was censured by the Seceder Presbytery of Chartiers, which produced such painful conditions between himself and his brethren that he was obliged to withdraw from the presbytery. He had served with distinction in the ministry of the Seceder branch of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and had given himself heartily to the healing of a breach between two parties in his own communion, known as Burghers and Anti-Burghers,

which had to do with taking oaths in expressing loyalty to the Established Church, as they interpreted it. His efforts, however, were futile at the time, but the union came later. He and his son, Alexander, had come in touch with the independent movements in Scotland and had been especially impressed by the ministries of Rowland Hill, the Haldanes, Alexander Carson and others. The Wesleyan revivals were likewise a great influence on their lives, as they stirred England, Scotland and especially Ireland.

In 1807, Thomas Campbell came to America in search of health and was assigned to Western Pennsylvania, which was then frontier territory. He was deeply impressed with the necessity of union as he came in contact with persons of various communions without any pastoral care. This condition led him to invite those scattered Christians to the Lord's Supper, although he knew at the time that it was against the practice of that branch of the Presbyterian Church, of which he was a member; but, to him, the fellowship of the saints held precedence over all creeds. To his Seceder brethren, he declared that he saw nothing wrong in his course, which appeared to him as "indispensably necessary to promote unity, peace and purity of the Church." And, "Say, brethren, what is my offense, that I should be thrust out from the heritage of the Lord, or from serving Him in that good work

to which He has been graciously pleased to call me?"

He continued preaching and his bitter experience showed him afresh the necessity of mingling freely with all Christians. They loved him and his ministry among them was attended with constant blessing. He made no attempt to organize a Church, but continued to emphasize the unwisdom of divisions among Christians, insisting that the Scriptures were all sufficient. For the mutual study of the Word, they formed "The Christian Association of Washington," and Campbell drew up what he termed "A Declaration and Address," which was nothing less than a declaration of independence, and he said: "It is high time for us not only to think, but to act for ourselves . . . and to take all our measures directly and immediately from the divine standard." That year, 1809, his son, Alexander, came to America and he enthusiastically subscribed to the Declaration and Address, for he had been having experiences in the old world that had directed him in the same channels of thought as his father.

They saw, however, the possibility of another communion being formed, and so Thomas Campbell applied for membership in the Pittsburgh Presbytery of the regular Presbyterian Church. This being denied him, they affiliated themselves in 1813 with the Baptists of the Redstone Association.

Alexander Campbell was then the recognized leader in the plea for the Bible basis of fellowship; but, because of Campbell's hostility to Calvinism as a test of fellowship, relations became strained and they transferred their membership to the Mahoning Association, where they were assured of more sympathy and freedom, for the Campbells were strongly averse to being parties to starting another communion. Later Alexander Campbell wrote: "I and the Church with which I am connected are in full communion with the Mahoning Baptist Association of Ohio; and through them with the whole Baptist Association of the United States; and I intend to continue in connection with these people, so long as they will permit me to say what I believe, to teach what I am assured of and to censure what is amiss in their views and practices. I have no idea of adding to the catalogue of new sects. This game has been played long enough." But the inevitable came. Excommunications began and by 1832 the Baptists and the Disciples were finally separated.

Against their will, the Disciples of Christ had been forced into a separate communion. They could not stifle their convictions. They could not sink out of sight. Their own experiences intensified to them the Church's need of their message, and thousands of believers, seeking for the union of Christendom by the way of the New

Testament, flocked to their standard. Alexander Campbell appeared to have been divinely endowed for the leadership of the nineteenth century Reformation, as Martin Luther had been for the sixteenth century and, for the next thirty years, although without authority above the humblest, he was the towering personality in that communion, where he delighted to be known as simply "Brother Campbell."

Other reformers left their theological systems and circumstances out of which denominational names were created. Not so with Alexander Campbell. He gave neither his name to any communion, nor did he leave a single sentence that is of authority in any Church in Christendom. He tore away all systems of theology from around the Bible, gave not to it his own, but left the holy pages clean as when they came from the hands of prophets, apostles and evangelists, that coming ages might read clearly God's message to the souls of men, so that to him belongs the title "the defender of the faith."

Emerson was right when he said "the standing army, the arsenal, the camp and the gibbet do not appertain to man. They only serve as an index to show where man is now." The strife and divisions of the past do not appertain to Christianity. Noble men fought on both sides —Roman Catholics and Protestants, Protestants and Disciples—fought for truth as they saw it and

the conflict only shows where Christianity was at that period. The best years lie before us. Truth belongs to no communion nor party and, as we proceed, it will fill all parties and communions, like the sun shining upon the snow-capped hills melts all that coldness into liquid beauty. The peace of the Church is as sure as the sun, and a thousand prophecies reach out for their fulfillments.

Our Father, Thou art the Friend of us all and the costliness of Thy Church is a perpetual reminder to us of the immortality of Thy love. When the days were dark in that long history since Jesus was on earth, some of our brothers lost the vision of Thyself, and Thy Word was sometimes forgotten in the bitterness of strife, but as we strive to get back to Thy sacred ideals of a holy and united Church, we ask that Thou wouldst check the first rising of sectarianism and unbrotherliness in our thoughts and hold us true to Thy Word, that Thy Spirit be no longer grieved. Make us long-suffering and charitable to those who differ with us and kind and gentle to all, especially to those who love us not. Show us the path—Thy path, for we would walk in no other, and may we take no step other than that which is ordered of Thee and go nowhere except Thou go with us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE HISTORY OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

LECTURE THREE

The History of the Disciples of Christ

HISTORY is one of God's books through which He speaks to living multitudes. Fichte called it "a constant inflowing of God into human affairs," and Farrar said: "History is like a battle. It sways to and fro, and it is full of shocks and flank movements, retreats and advances, rout and resistance, utterly confusing to those who take part in it; nevertheless we know in the evening which side has lost or won." The whole history of Christianity presents one series of baffling problems. There are at times in its history such grave departures from the standard of Christ and, in His name, such unspeakable things are done, that if one lingers on the details of those transactions of the night of our common faith, he might turn away in disgust from the only light in the world, and say with the Frenchman, who cried in despair: "Christ has come, but whence cometh salvation?" But, if he looks with wide-visioned eye, until above all retreats and advances he sees God, he will understand that beyond to-day lies an untrodden domain of human life, whose westward horizon waits for the peace of toil and the triumph of truth.

The history of movements in Christianity is similar to the history of Christianity at large, only their channels are not so deep, nor their horizons so wide. It is only when movements lose themselves in the bosom of Christianity that their influences strike the deeps and leave their pulse beats on all shores. The history of the people known as the Disciples of Christ craves to touch the Christianity of the whole world and to be lost in the deathless love of God. It seeks no preferment for itself, but its desire is only to serve for the victory of Jesus Christ our common Lord.

I

Beginning in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, along about 1830 to 1832, the Disciples became a separate communion. They had back of them an earnest desire for the union of Christendom by a return to the New Testament in doctrine and practice. Before them they had a deeply entrenched sectarianism, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, whose hostility was uncompromising, chiefly because of the prevailing belief that denominationalism was the normal and permanent condition of the Church; but, with no creed other than Jesus Christ and no book of authority other than the New Testament, the Disciples have pushed their way into nearly

all parts of the earth, preaching Jesus and Him crucified.

They have not sought to make men accept any human philosophy or systems of theology, for they have had none to present, but their passion has been to make men accept the living Christ as their personal Saviour—to wear His name, keep His ordinances and live His life. They have made their failures—sometimes gross failures, for after all the best of them have been only men, men of like passions as Elijah and Peter and James and Origen and Augustine and Francis and Luther, but nevertheless fidelity to their ideals has borne them forward with phenomenal victories.

Into the background of this history, their immediate antecedents reach into the most disheartening period of the life of the American republic. England forbade the publication of the Bible in the colonies so long as they were dependencies of her crown, and there was a famine of the word of God. The French soldiers, who had so bravely aided the colonies in their struggle for independence, had scattered infidel ideas broadcast over the republic. Slavery, duelling, intemperance, profanity, lewdness and every kind of immorality was looked upon with complaisance. Colleges were hot-beds of skepticism and three-fourths of their students were avowed unbelievers. Daniel Dorchester, in his

"Christianity in the United States," says that at Yale College "in 1795 only eleven undergraduates were members of the College Church. Four years after the number was reduced to four or five and at one communion only a single student was present."

Calvinism was the prevailing system of theology throughout the nation, and so in the minds of most Christians there was nothing to be done. Parents objected to their children being talked to regarding their personal salvation, for said they: "If our sons and daughters are the elect of God, He will in His own time and way regenerate them. To persuade them to become Christians may make them hypocrites." There was bitter opposition to Sunday-schools and all societies for the inculcation of temperance and for the distribution of Bibles and tracts and for preaching of the Gospel. Persons who took part in furthering any of these interests were regarded as heretics. An attempt on the part of some Baptist churches in Maryland as late as 1836 to coöperate in missions and the distribution of Bibles resulted in the Baltimore Association erasing their names from the roll

Sectarianism maintained a constant warfare between the Churches and political jealousies and factions had brought the union to the verge of dissolution, while many thought that Christianity had proven to be incompetent for the world's

need and was then passing away, like the religions of ancient Rome and Athens. Dorchester said: "The most pious people in the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the United States, entertained a faith so unlike the present belief of evangelical Christians as to almost create the impression on our minds that their religion was not the same religion which we now have and in which we believe." Jeremiah B. Jeter, perhaps the ablest Baptist minister in Virginia in the middle of the nineteenth century and author of a book opposing the Reformation of the Campbells, dared to say in the opening pages of his book: "That a reformation was needed by the Christian sects of that time none, who possess a tolerable acquaintance with their condition and the claims of the Gospel, will deny. . . . Among the Baptist Churches there were some sad evils. In parts of the country the Churches were infected with an antinomian spirit, and blighted by a heartless, speculative, hair-splitting orthodoxy." The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church issued a letter in 1798 expressing its "pain and fearful apprehension" concerning the "prevailing impiety and contempt for laws and instructions of religion and an abounding infidelity." Other communions expressed themselves in similar fear.

As a protest against these conditions, devout believers were meeting in prayer and seeking to

find a way out of the gloom. Here and there were fearless prophets calling for repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ. The beginning of the nineteenth century gave some indications of improvement, both in Church and college life. An occasional revival brought together vast multitudes. In 1801, a great revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, under the leadership of Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian minister, swept like a forest fire through that region. Stone wrote that "the roads were literally crowded with wagons, carriages, horsemen, footmen, moving to the solemn camp. The sight was affecting. It was judged by military men on the ground that there were between twenty and thirty thousand collected. Four or five preachers were frequently speaking at the same time in different parts of the encampment without confusion. Methodist and Baptist preachers aided in the work and all appeared cordially united in it—of one mind and one soul, and the salvation of sinners seemed to be the great object of all."

But the meeting precipitated grave trouble, for Richard McNemar, a Presbyterian minister associated with Stone, was called before the Lexington Presbytery as a kind of test case and censured for affiliating with ministers of other communions during the revival. Conditions became so painful that Stone, McNemar and others

withdrew from the Lexington Presbytery and, with others who were in sympathy with their more liberal policy, organized the Springfield Presbytery. This, however, was dissolved in 1804 and Stone wrote its "Last Will and Testament," in which was expressed the desire for union with all Christians. They took the name Christian and "the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven," "without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men or rudiments of the world." It was the beginning of a great movement and thousands enlisted in their fellowship.

Some years after, Thomas Campbell, a minister of the Seceder branch of the Presbyterian Church of Washington County, Pennsylvania, invited all Christians to sit together in the observance of the Lord's Supper. The Seceder Presbyterians practiced close communion, and Campbell was censured by the Presbytery of Chartiers, from which he appealed to the Associate Synod of North America, and the censure was removed. After this, the charges which had been before the presbytery were referred to a committee, which expressed itself as finding "sufficient ground to infer censure." Not desiring to be separated from his brethren Campbell submitted to the censure; but out of the issues of the trial and because of his catholicity of spirit, opposition against him grew more bitter. Though deeply pained, he faced the inev-

itable necessity and withdrew from the Seceders. He continued preaching in the neighbourhood, where he was greatly beloved, using barns, groves and houses as the occasion offered, and the dominant note of his message was: "Christian liberality and Christian union upon the basis of the Bible."

His earnest appeals led him to affirm that "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent," which has become an axiom among the Disciples. It was a significant motto and marked the beginning of another current in the tide of Christian union. Campbell himself did not realize the full force of what he had said. It brought opposition immediately from the little company to which he was speaking and one arose and said: "Mr. Campbell, if we adopt that as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism." "Of course," said Campbell, "if infant baptism is not found in the Scriptures, we can have nothing to do with it." Another excitedly arose and said: "I hope that I may never see the day when my heart will renounce that blessed saying of Scripture, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven,'" whereupon another said: "I would remark that in the portion of Scripture you have quoted there is no reference whatever to infant baptism." It was a serious time. Acheson, who

had made the defense for infant baptism, went out and wept alone, which was a prophecy of the trials that awaited the advance of this new movement. Campbell had been baptized in infancy and he appears to have never doubted the Scriptural authority for that baptism. Although representing nearly every phase of denominational differences, they were one in their search for truth and knew not the path that they were destined to tread.

In 1809, Thomas Campbell organized "The Christian Association of Washington" on the model of the Wesleyan and Haldanean societies of the old world. It was not a Church in any sense, but simply an association of persons from various communions "as voluntary advocates of Church reformation," and he wrote "A Declaration and Address" setting forth the purpose of the Association and declaring independence of all systems of theology as tests of fellowship; he pleaded for the union of all Christians upon the Bible, insisting that "nothing ought to be received into the faith and worship of the Church, or be made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament."

Fearing that they might become another sect in the midst of the already too many sects, Campbell was urged by his friends to make overtures to the Synod of Pittsburgh for "Christian and ministerial communion" with the regular

Presbyterian Church, but the synod by a unanimous vote refused to receive him upon the following grounds:

"(1) For expressing his belief that there are some opinions taught in our Confession of Faith which are not found in the Bible.

"(2) For declaring that the administration of baptism to infants is not authorized by Scriptural precept or example.

"(3) For encouraging his son to preach without any regular authority.

"(4) For opposing creeds and confessions as injurious to the interest of religion."

This was in 1810 and the next year they organized their membership at Brush Run into a Church. Out of a careful study of the Scriptures, Alexander, son of Thomas Campbell, decided to be rebaptized and his father and a majority of the members decided to follow his example. And they were baptized by immersion June 12, 1812, on a public confession that "Jesus is the Messiah, the only begotten Son of God." Henceforth the leadership of the movement gradually fell to Alexander Campbell, who was at that time perhaps twenty-five years old.

Two streams had started—one in Kentucky in 1804 and another in Pennsylvania in 1809. Both Stone and Campbell were Presbyterian ministers

of culture and piety and each was acting without the knowledge of the other. In consequence of their protests against prevailing conditions, both were forced to leave the Presbyterian Church. Those associated with Stone continued their independent course, being called Christians, like the model of the first disciples at Antioch, while those associated with Campbell, unwilling to be a separate communion, accepted overtures from the Baptists.

In 1813 they affiliated themselves with that communion for a time, the wisdom of which is questioned by some, because of the handicap of aligning themselves with any communion and then the bitterness that followed the separation. That it gave the Campbells the most propitious field for their operations cannot be denied; at the same time Campbell gave prestige to the Baptists, for he was the ablest man among them in those years and his fame throughout America and Europe was counted to their cause; besides to Campbell must be given some of the credit, along with European influences, for largely freeing the Baptist Church from credal authority and other unscriptural practices that characterized it in the first part of the nineteenth century.

The Brush Run Church had been received into the Redstone Association on clearly stipulated conditions that they were not required to subscribe to the Philadelphia Confession and "be allowed to

teach and preach whatever they learned from the Holy Scriptures," but almost from the beginning they found themselves in an unwelcomed fellowship, due largely to the prevailing ignorance through that section, for what Newman in his "History of the Baptists" says of the early Baptists of Kentucky applied equally, if not more significantly, to the Redstone district. He said: "They looked with suspicion upon the highly educated and preferred a minister from the ranks of the people earning a support by following secular pursuits."

In 1816, Campbell delivered before the Redstone Association his famous sermon on the Law, in which he contrasted the Old and New Testament, attacking the popular divisions of moral, ceremonial and judicial, and arguing that the Old Testament law was primarily designed for the Jews and that the New Testament was the book of Christ, whose authority was altogether above the authority of Moses and whose words must be the sole rule of the Christian life. It was based on the covenant idea in which he held to the historic sense of development, declaring that the Christian dispensation was the sunlight age of the world. All this is very ordinary now, but it precipitated bitter controversy then. He published it, hoping that on being read it might be better understood. It was his first publication, and years after he wrote that but for the persecu-

tion begun on the alleged heresy of this sermon, it was doubtful whether the present Reformation would ever have been advocated by him.

As Campbell's influence widened, the opposition became more bitter, so that by 1823 it was definitely planned to expel him from the Redstone Association. In 1820, he had held a public debate at Mount Vernon, Ohio, with John Walker, a Seceder Presbyterian minister, on Christian baptism, and he hesitated six months before accepting the challenge, not being satisfied at that time that it was the best method for making known the truth, although afterwards he regarded it with favour.

In the year 1823, he was solicited to debate the same subject at Washington, Kentucky, with William Maccalla. These debates lasted for several days. They were afterwards printed and widely read. The subject was of a character to mightily strengthen Campbell with the Baptists, but to separate him further from the Presbyterians. Hearing of the plan to expel him and not wishing to appear at the disadvantage of being excommunicated by his own communion when he met Maccalla in debate, he had twenty members, himself one of the number, to be granted letters from the Brush Run Church and they organized a Church in Wellsburg, and applied for membership in the Mahoning Baptist

Association, which was composed of a more liberal and better educated ministry. To the disappointment of his enemies, when they called upon him, he informed them that he was not under their jurisdiction.

That year on one of his tours to Kentucky, he met P. S. Fall, minister of the Baptist Church in Louisville and an Englishman of scholarship and piety, who warmly espoused the Reformation, and afterwards Fall went to the Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and made the Bible the sole standard there as he had done at Louisville. In 1826, ten Churches of the Redstone Association excommunicated fourteen of their sister Churches for being in sympathy with the Reformation, and among the ministers excommunicated was Matthias Luce, who had baptized the Campbells in violation of Baptist usage.

That year registered up to eighteen Churches for the Reformation—Brush Run, Wellsburg, Louisville, Nashville and the fourteen of the Redstone Association—and thousands of members throughout the country in sympathy with the message, while excommunications increased, but even then the Campbells had no idea of leaving the Baptist Church. They believed that the principles of the Reformation could be worked out in that communion. The traditional love of religious liberty, they believed, was a guarantee among the more enlightened Baptists for the

continuation of their fellowship with them. The Mahoning Association came over in a body, with the exception of four Churches, and other associations and Churches lined up for the Bible basis over against the Philadelphia Confession, which had been adopted by the Baptists in 1742 and was a Calvinistic creed.

In 1823, Campbell started the *Christian Baptist*, a monthly publication, and in 1830 he discontinued it and started the *Millennial Harbinger*, also a monthly publication, and a decidedly better spirited journal, but both boldly and unmercifully attacked the abuses of the Christianity of their day, whether among Baptists, Presbyterians or others and fearlessly pointed the way to a better condition by the abolition of creeds and all systems of theology as tests of fellowship and by a return to the New Testament in doctrine and practice.

By 1830, the continued affiliation with the Baptists began to appear doubtful, although Thomas Campbell made a tour East in 1831 and he was received into the leading Baptist pulpits of Virginia; but by 1832 that courtesy was denied Alexander in New York, Philadelphia and elsewhere. Bitterness from both sides had gotten into the controversy and the Reformers were driven from the Baptist fold. John Kerr, of Virginia, led in the passage of the decrees of the Dover Association in the fall of 1832, which ex-

communicated six preachers [1] and which may be regarded as marking the final separation between the Reformers and the Baptists. Upon this action, Campbell wrote Kerr: "All the world must see that we have been forced into a separate communion. We were driven out of doors because we preferred the approbation of the Lord to the approbation of any sect in Christendom. If that be our weakness, we ought not to be despised—if that be our wisdom, we ought not to be condemned. We have lost no peace of conscience, nor of the honour which comes from God, none of the enjoyments of the Holy Spirit, nothing of the sweetness of Christian communion by the unkindness of those who once called us brethren."

II

Thus the chapter of the history of the Disciples began in the third decade of the nineteenth century. Up to this time, they were known as Reformers or sometimes as Reformed Baptists or Christian Baptists and by the rude as Campbellites, but Campbell advocated any Scriptural name, preferably Disciples of Christ, which was not then used by any communion, and it had in it the meekness and simplicity of the earliest Christian association.

[1] The name Peter Ainslie, grandfather of the lecturer, headed this list of preachers.

It is significant that the Disciples are among the few communions that do not wear a nickname. Even "Roman Catholic" was thrust upon that communion by its enemies as the name "Methodist" was thrust upon that communion. Luther said to his followers: "I pray you to leave my name alone, and not to call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine! I have not been crucified for any one. St. Paul (1 Cor. iii.) would not that any one should call themselves of Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ. How then doth it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ! Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with them all; let us call ourselves only Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes." Newman said of the Baptists: "The name Baptist was not a self-chosen one. . . . These party names they earnestly repudiated, preferring to be called Brethren, Christians, Disciples of Christ, Believers etc." In spite of it being offensive to other Christians, the Disciples have felt that they had no other alternative than to wear Scriptural names, as every other movement before them had tried to do, but afterwards yielded to popular demand.

The best of men will look at things differently, and the present divisions of Christendom furnish a very practical illustration of it. Many good

men among the Baptists, Presbyterians and others misunderstood Campbell. His Reformation would not have been in bitterness in this day. It was a part of the spirit of the times. Errors were deeply rooted and prejudice was strong. It is always difficult for a reformer to make himself understood. His view-point is new and few have climbed to the heights with him.

It was so with Campbell. His message was new. He avoided the terminology of the schools and spoke in the language of Scripture, and his simplicity in many instances was a hindrance rather than a help. In discussions, he never used the word "Trinity," but when speaking of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit, he was always careful to use Scriptural phrases—not that he did not believe in the Trinity, for he was a Trinitarian, but he contended that the doctrine was a matter of the schools. Said he: "I have been asked a thousand times, 'What do you think of the doctrine of the Trinity—what do you think of the Trinity?' Some—nay, many think that to falter here is terrible; that to doubt here, or not to speak in the language of the schools, is the worst of all errors and heresies. I have not spent, perhaps, an hour in ten years in thinking about the Trinity. It is no term of mine. It is a word which belongs not to the Bible in any translation of it I ever saw. I teach nothing, I say nothing, I think nothing about it, save that

it is not a Scriptural term and consequently can have no Scriptural idea attached to it. But I discover that the Trinitarians, Unitarians and the simple Arians are always in the field upon this subject and that the more they contend, the less they know about it."

He was generally misunderstood regarding conversion. To him, unless a change of heart was accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit, it was no conversion at all, but because he unmercifully drove out of court all evidence of experience based on dreams and voices and sounds and feeling, they accused him of teaching only head religion. But to him the better experience was as Paul said: "Faith cometh by hearing," by hearing the testimony of the Gospel, and believing it, the evidence was, first, a public confession of it, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"; and, second, obedience is the proof of that love, for Jesus said: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments"—not alone baptism, but all that He commanded. The evidence of the reason for the hope is based upon the Scriptures. Campbell said: "I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy, without their own

knowledge or consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven. . . . Should I find a pedo-baptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise, I would be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians."

He was also misunderstood on baptism and was charged with teaching baptismal regeneration, when he was further from that doctrine than either the Baptists or those pedo-baptists, who accused him of it, for he taught that no person should be baptized unless he had publicly avowed his faith—not in a doctrine, but in the living Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus, which was an unheard-of thing in those days. Preceding every baptism must be faith, repentance and confession. Then instead of going into definitions and speaking in the language of the schools, he quoted the Scriptures: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "Why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Sinners believed

and were baptized, while men acquainted with the language of the schools went away confounded, saying, "We never saw it on this fashion."

On other points there were real differences. Regarding the Old Testament, he taught as Paul affirmed: "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster"—not that the Old Testament was not to be read or studied, but he denied it as authoritative in the Christian life, where Christ alone is supreme. From this many averred.

Likewise on the design of baptism, he taught in the language of the Scriptures that it is "for the remission of sins"—not baptism alone; but, with the antecedents of faith and repentance, it becomes the culminating act on the part of the sinner to the covenant of salvation. Man needs it to know of his forgiveness, but God's forgiveness far exceeds man's knowledge, and so he said: "I do not make baptism absolutely essential to salvation in any case." And further: "There is no rejection of the ordinance of baptism by sprinkled persons; but a mistake of what it is." Baptism is a symbolic ordinance and marks the culmination of the sinner's conversion to God. Likewise from this many averred.

Although a moderate Calvinist, Campbell op-

posed making any system of theology a test of fellowship, affirming that faith in Christ and obedience to Him as revealed in the New Testament is all sufficient, so he was hostile against all creeds and confessions. Their tendency was to displace Christ and the Bible and they neither converted sinners nor sanctified saints. At the same time the prevailing sentiment in all communions in those days was that creeds were necessities, although against the heresies of Phygellus, Hermogenes, Philetus, Hymenæus and Alexander, no Scriptural precedent of a creed or confession was left us.

In the work of the Holy Spirit, too, there was a difference. It was the common notion that the sinner was powerless to believe except by the Holy Spirit coming in answer to prayer and regenerating the soul, enabling it to turn to God, but Campbell taught that the sinner has the power to believe and that the Holy Spirit operates through the word, giving the testimony for faith, hence the propriety of the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

He also advocated the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. After all, the Campbells differed but little with the orthodox conception of the religion of this day. Their Reformation dealt with the practical phases of Christianity rather than the theoretical. These were the

chief misunderstandings and differences, however, but the greatest difference, greater than all these combined, was his uncompromising catholicity, against which the narrow sectarianism of his day severely revolted.

Bossuet acknowledges in his "Variations of the Protestant Churches" the crying need of reformation in the Roman Catholic Church preceding the sixteenth century, but he was unwilling for it to be done by Martin Luther opening wide the Bible to the masses, when how else could it have been done except by an open Bible? The Roman Catholics claim that Luther's speech was coarse, but perhaps it was necessary in order to wake up an age whose coarseness had driven the Bible into cloisters and chained it to pulpit desks.

Jeter and others acknowledged the need of a reformation in the opening of the nineteenth century, but many of them were conscientiously blind to the only possibility of that reformation, which was to be accomplished by fearlessly calling men back to the open Bible, which had become covered with all manner of systems of theology. If Campbell's assaults were sharp and merciless, and that they were was a necessity, it must not be forgotten that the language of prophets and reformers is sometimes necessarily severe and extreme. It could not be otherwise. Stone wrote him in 1827: "We confess our fear that in some of your well-in-

tended aims at error you have unintentionally wounded the truth." Be that so or not, one thing is sure and that is that smaller men following Campbell's example in their assaults frequently did it in such uncouth fashion that the message of the Disciples sometimes appeared coarse and legalistic. The abuse of a revolution is always found in this extreme tendency which sometimes has overturned the principles for which the revolution stood.

The history of the Disciples began amid chaos. The Campbells were men of peace. Thomas never dreamed of anything else but a harmonious progress until all Christendom would come under the absolute authority of Christ, but instead of peace, everywhere was a state of war and with the leadership upon his shoulders, Alexander sat as a willing listener in the councils of his brethren. Other than the organizations of the local Churches with a plurality of elders and deacons on the New Testament model, they had no ecclesiastical form of government to bind them together, and the whole movement was marked by an intense individualism, sometimes as extreme as that taught by Rousseau in his "Social Contract" with its cry against governments and conventions and a plea for primitive simplicity.

Seventy-five years before, Rousseau's thought was first in the European mind and out of it

came the French Revolution and the downfall of the last remnant of the medieval system. That thought still pervaded both the political and religious atmosphere not only of America, but of the world, and doubtless was an unconscious factor in the early history of the Disciples, for in breaking away from creeds and ecclesiastical authority, they became the leaders of a revolution, and for a time this individualism looked as though it would be their destruction. Their religious neighbours mocked and predicted failure of an attempt to hold together the Churches without a creed or some ecclesiastical authority.

Was the movement practical? Would it work? To the Disciples it was a greater problem than applied to themselves. They were asking in their own hearts, Will the principles of Protestantism work? Can the Bible be made the sole authority in religion with the right of private interpretation? It had never been done before, for the creeds as tests of fellowship were the living witnesses against the right of private interpretation. To the Disciples, it was even more than having to do with the principles of Protestantism. They were asking, Can Christianity stand alone with only Christ and the Scriptures? This appeared to have been the first order of the Church. Why might it not be so again? Is He not sufficient for all our need?

It was a time of deep concern. They diligently studied their Bibles and prayed and looked to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, under whose ministry they recognized the Church was living as distinctly as the apostles lived under the personal ministry of Jesus.

III

New men came to the front. Walter Scott, a Presbyterian, educated in the University of Edinburgh, came to America in 1818 and identified himself with a Haldanean Church in Pittsburgh. Later this Church and a Baptist Church united. In 1820, he met Campbell and threw himself without reserve into the Reformation. To him it has been said is due the rediscovery of baptism "for the remission of sins." In 1827, he attended the Mahoning Baptist Association and was appointed its evangelist. He became indeed the evangel of the burning torch and crowds hung on his ministry as he unfolded to them in their order: going, preaching, believing, repenting, baptism, salvation, Holy Spirit and condemnation for the unbelieving. He made the book of Acts a commentary on the Gospels and the charge of limiting the work of the Holy Spirit to the word was never made against him. To him as much as to the Campbells belongs laying the foundation of the Reformation.

Another unusual man was Robert Richardson, scholar, educator and biographer of Alexander Campbell. He was deeply devotional and wrote a work of merit on "The Office of the Holy Spirit" in developing true piety. Thomas Campbell was still giving his gentle life in appeals for union, but conditions were forcing Alexander for a time to give more attention to the restoration of "the ancient order of things," as it was called, than to Christian union and, because of his great personality, the movement unconsciously began shifting from its original basis to the restoration of primitive Christianity, which continued so in the main until the opening of the twentieth century—not that the vision of a united Christendom was lost, for later Campbell, apparently conscious of the shift of basis, said: "The conversion of the world is planned and ordered by the will of heaven to be dependent upon the unity of the disciples as well as this unity dependent upon the apostles' testimony." Restoration therefore became the key-note.

Through the wide distribution of the *Millennial Harbinger*, congregations after the "ancient order" were found in England, Scotland, Ireland and Australia, as well as in the American cities, along the Atlantic coast, and many of these reached back before Thomas Campbell wrote his "Declaration and Address" or Barton W. Stone wrote his "Last Will and Testament." A com-

mon purpose now bound them into general fellowship, so that the Disciples almost at once had thousands in their membership in all parts of the English-speaking world.

By 1835, a union with the Christians under Stone was effected. On a tour to Kentucky in 1824, Campbell met Stone and while differing in some points, they agreed in their general purpose and Campbell and Stone became true friends, which is always the beginning and the only beginning of real union of any kind. The prejudice against the Christians on the part of the Disciples was that they leaned towards Unitarian theology regarding Christ, that they did not keep the Lord's Supper weekly and that while Stone and most of those associated with him had been baptized by immersion, yet it was not considered as always necessary to Church-membership. The prejudice against the Disciples was that they limited the work of the Holy Spirit to the written word and that Campbell himself was not sufficiently explicit on the influence of the Spirit. Besides, with the Christians the predominating idea was the uniting of men under Christ for the conversion of the world, while the predominating idea among the Disciples had become "the desire of an exact conformity to the primitive faith and practice" as the way to union. In a prayerful conference at Lexington, Kentucky, under the leadership of Stone

for the Christians and John Smith for the Disciples, it was found that the prejudices were based largely upon misrepresentation and, where there were differences of opinion, as for instance whether the name Christian or Disciple should be adopted, the right of private opinion was to prevail.

Both sides stood for loyalty to Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God and obedience to His commandments. Neither party had surrendered to the other, but both were helped, for the evangelistic spirit of the Christians gave an impetus to the Disciples, while the careful study of the Scriptures on the part of the Disciples proved a stimulus to the Christians. It took several years for the union to be effected after the decision of the leaders and even then some of Stone's associates refused to go into it and are to this day separated from the Disciples, being known, however, as the Christians. They censured Stone for lending his influence to the union, to which he replied: "What else could we do, the Bible being our directory? . . . They held the name Christian as sacred as we did—they were equally averse to making opinions the test of fellowship—and equally solicitous for the salvation of souls. This union, irrespective of reproach, I view as the noblest act of my life."

The Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829 called together the most distinguished men of

the commonwealth. West Virginia at that time being a part of Virginia, Alexander Campbell was elected to that convention and sat with Former President James Madison, Chief Justice Marshall, John Randolph of Roanoke and others, and was regarded as one of the foremost men in the discussion. Of him Madison said: "It was my pleasure to hear him very often as a preacher of the Gospel and I regard him as the ablest and most original expounder of the Scriptures I have ever heard."

That same year, he had a public debate in Cincinnati with Robert Owen, of Lanark, Scotland, who styled himself "an open and decided opponent of Christianity." Owen made a tour of the American cities, proclaiming his new doctrine for social betterment and declared all religions a superstition and a hindrance to progress. From New Orleans, he challenged the American ministry for the defense of Christianity. None responding, finally Campbell accepted the challenge. For nine days those two giants wrestled in combat and one of Campbell's defenses of Christianity extended through twelve hours, equalling the apologies of Origen or Tertullian. Owen said of him: "That which I admire in him above all else is his downright honesty and fairness to which he believes to be the cause of truth. . . . This is a straightforward proceeding in the investigation of truth, which I

have long sought for, but which, until now, I have sought in vain."

In 1837, in Cincinnati, he met in public debate Archbishop John B. Purcell, of the Roman Catholic Church, in defense of Protestantism, and Purcell acknowledged his defense to have been the ablest he had ever heard. In 1843, in Lexington, Kentucky, he met in debate for eighteen days N. L. Rice, minister of the Presbyterian Church, in defense of Christian baptism by immersion of penitent believers, over which Henry Clay presided, and nothing new has been said on either side of that subject since. Numerous other debates were held and Campbell always stood his ground like a master, yet he cared little for debates. His own taste was other than controversy and he never allowed it to come in his sermons and advised his brethren against ever using their pulpits for controversy.

On his tours crowds gathered and legislatures adjourned to hear him. On a visit to Washington in 1829, both houses of Congress adjourned, and he spoke for two hours in the House of Representatives to the lawmakers of the nation. Of him George D. Prentice, editor of the Louisville *Courier Journal*, wrote: "Alexander Campbell is unquestionably one of the most extraordinary men of our times. Putting wholly out of view his tenets, with which of course we have nothing to do, he claims, by virtue of his intrinsic qualities,

as manifested in his achievements, a place among the foremost spirits of our age. His energy, self-reliance and self-fidelity, if we may use the expression, are of the stamp that belongs only to the world's first leaders in thought and action. His personal excellence is certainly without a stain or shadow. His intellect, it is scarcely too much to say, is among the clearest, richest, profoundest ever vouchsafed to man. . . . Surely the life of a man thus excellent and gifted is a part of the common treasure of society. In his essential character he belongs to no sect or party, but to the world."

General Robert E. Lee applied to him the words that Dr. Symonds applied to John Milton: "He was a man in whom were illustriously combined all the qualities that could adorn or elevate the nature to which he belonged; knowledge the most various and extended, virtue that never loitered in her career nor deviated from her course. A man who, if he had been delegated as a representative of his species to one of the many superior worlds, would have suggested a grand idea of the human race." Bishop John E. Hurst said "that for a generation his name was a tower of strength over the whole United States. He was a man of pure character and the highest consecration. He leavened the whole country with his views." A writer in the New York *Independent* affirmed that there is not a religious

body in Christendom that, whether it will confess it or not, has not been profoundly affected by the life and work of Alexander Campbell.

In 1866, he fell asleep in Jesus, saying as the light of the eternal morning softly stole over him: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell, Walter Scott and others associated with them had likewise finished their labours, and the Disciples numbered a membership of perhaps 400,000 persons. This is made more remarkable when it is remembered that an isolated but beautiful spot in the mountains of West Virginia was the basis] of operations, which suited then for such a cause about as well as the mountains of Wyoming would suit now.

The early Disciples were so diligent in their loyalty to the New Testament plan of salvation that they appeared to have entirely overlooked the New Testament geography, from which it is learned that Jesus did not make the mountains of Judæa the basis of His operations, nor did Paul make the mountains of Asia Minor the basis of his operations. They visited those regions, but both put most of their ministries in the cities—Jesus in the cities of Palestine and Paul in the cities of the Roman empire, for the simple reason that great numbers of people were there. Not that city people are worse than country people, for

perhaps their piety is about the same, but vast multitudes make up the cities. Had Campbell and his colabourers made their headquarters in some of the great Eastern cities and worked through the rural districts as did Jesus and Paul, the number of the Disciples would have been doubled if not quadrupled, for spiritual restlessness was as evident in the great cities then as in the rural districts, and besides, cities always have been and always will be the ruling seat of nations. That provincial policy gave a provincialism to the early history of the Disciples from which in many quarters there has not been a complete recovery.

In his able editorship of the *Christian Standard*, Cincinnati, which had its beginning in 1866, Isaac Errett gave widening lines to the advancing movement. Benjamin Franklin, editor of the *American Christian Review*, likewise Cincinnati, stood more for legalistic interpretation, and all the way between these were strong characters, consecrated men, who were thinking and preaching and writing, and others that followed them. John T. Johnson, twice elected to Congress and for a time in the Kentucky judiciary, was in the foremost rank of the best preachers. There was Moses E. Lard, preacher, editor and author; Robert Milligan, educator, editor, author and preacher; John Allen Gano, preacher; Tolbert Fanning, editor and preacher; H. W Everest,

preacher, author and educator; W. K. Pendleton, educator, editor and preacher; J. W. McGarvey, educator, author and preacher; J. H. Garrison, editor, author and preacher; the Rogers and the Creaths and others in the middle west standing shoulder to shoulder with these, and in Virginia, Goss, Coleman, Hopson, Abell, Ainslie, Dearborn, Shelbourne, Bullard, Tyler and others, and so on in other sections of the country. The Disciples have been largely a rural people, but some of their preachers have made city pulpits extend beyond their parishes for the message of concord—ministries like those of F. D. Power's in Washington, E. L. Powell's in Louisville and B. B. Tyler's in New York.

IV

The leaders among the Disciples were educated men and they saw the need of schools. In 1836, Bacon College was started in Kentucky. Among its presidents was James Shannon, who afterwards became president of the University of Missouri, and Bacon College, after some changes and consolidations, is now Transylvania University at Lexington, Kentucky. To Alexander Campbell the Bible should be the basis of all education, and art, science and literature should be made tributary to that Book, for moral character is an essential part of education, so in 1841 he

founded Bethany College at his home in Brooke County, West Virginia, and, for the first time in the history of the world, made the Bible a text-book, like any other book in a college curriculum, against which came violent protests from colleges and journals of other communions charging him with sacrilege and infidelity.

In 1850, Butler College at Indianapolis, Indiana, and Hiram College, twenty miles out from Cleveland, were started. Over the latter James A. Garfield was the second president, afterwards being the twentieth president of the United States. Eureka College, Illinois, was founded in 1855. Through the munificence of F M. Drake, governor of Iowa, Drake University had its beginning in 1881. Texas Christian University was started in 1873 and from Virginia and North Carolina their colleges are scattered over the continent to Oregon and California, numbering in all over forty. Besides, hosts of their men are filling important posts in American universities and other institutions of learning.

In literary work, their contributions have been largely polemic in character—perhaps too much so, for their own good and the good of others, but from the beginning of their movement there has been no lack of literature—journals weekly, monthly and quarterly and books setting forth their message to the world. In journals at this time, the *Christian Century*, Chicago, is the voice

of the extreme progressives, while the *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, Tennessee, represents the extreme legalistic phase of the movement, and the *Christian-Evangelist*, St. Louis, and the *Christian Standard*, Cincinnati, fall in between these. Alexander Campbell left sixty volumes with his name on their title pages. J. T. Barclay's "City of the Great King" is a standard work on the history of Jerusalem, as is J. W. McGarvey's "Land of the Bible" on Palestine, also his "Commentary on Acts" is among the best commentaries on that section of the New Testament. Other books are Errett's "Evenings With the Bible," Milligan's "Scheme of Redemption," Lamar's "First Principles," Everest's "Divine Demonstration," Willett's "Teachings of the Book," Kershner's "Religion of Christ," Garrison's "Alone with God," and five hundred other volumes that make in part the writings of the Disciples.

David S. Burnett was the leader among the Disciples for coöperative missionary work. In 1845 he organized the American Christian Bible Society with headquarters in Cincinnati, he being its first president. Its object was "to aid in the distribution of the sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, among all nations." This proved to be a step towards a national missionary organization, so in 1849 the first national missionary convention of the Disciples convened

in Cincinnati and organized the American Christian Missionary Society, of which Alexander Campbell was the president for twenty-six years, and the other next longest in the presidency was R. M. Bishop, governor of Ohio. This society has its headquarters in Cincinnati and, as its name indicates, is confined to missionary work in America. Since its organization, it has established 3,900 congregations and added through its missionaries 192,500 persons to the Churches. Last year they had nearly 500 missionaries in the field.

In 1874, the women's missionary work was started under the title of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions with headquarters in Indianapolis. This organization does both home and foreign work. They have 259 workers in Canada, New Zealand, Jamaica, India, Mexico, Porto Rico, South America and Africa, and with 177 in the United States, making a total of 436 workers sustained entirely or in part by this board, which also supports forty-two schools in the foreign field and four mountain schools in America, having in all 6,000 pupils enrolled. It has established five Bible chairs at as many state universities, besides the College of Missions at Indianapolis, which is a training school for missionaries preparatory to their going abroad, emphasizing the higher standard as expressed in the Edinburgh conference, so that their students

are missionary specialists. They also have five orphanages in foreign lands, with nearly 500 children under their care and five hospitals where 97,880 patients were treated last year. The work among the Negroes is under their control with six schools in the South.

In 1875, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society was started with headquarters in Cincinnati, the first president being Charles Louis Loos, president of Transylvania University, who perhaps more than any other man of his day approached that catholicity of spirit that so characterized the Campbells. A. McLean and F. M. Rains have been the missionary apostles among the Disciples, and this society supports 174 American missionaries in China, Japan, India, Korea, Philippines, Tibet, Africa, Cuba, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and England, with ninety-five schools having more than 5,000 in attendance and with twenty-four hospitals, where 157,988 patients were treated last year. In 1878, they sent W. T. Moore to England and through the liberality of Timothy Coop, of Southport, he established the *Christian Commonwealth* in London.

In 1886, the National Benevolent Association was organized with headquarters in St. Louis. It has under its control eleven institutions, including six orphanages, four homes for the aged and one hospital, with immediate preparations for several others. In 1888, the Board of Church

Extension was organized, with headquarters in Kansas City, and they have now a million dollar fund with which they have aided in erecting 1,531 Church buildings. G. W. Muckley is its guiding genius. In 1908, R. A. Long, a wealthy layman of Kansas City, established the Christian Board of Publication in St. Louis and there are national boards of Ministerial Relief, Education, Temperance, Sunday-schools, Christian Endeavour and all other necessities for business in the Church. These make their reports in a non-legislative national convention which meets annually. Besides each state has an annual convention. In some instances the states are subdivided into districts and the smaller states are combined into one convention. At the Louisville convention of 1912, definite steps were taken to organize the national convention on a delegate basis, naming it the "General Convention of Churches of Christ."

V

In 1909, the Disciples celebrated in Pittsburgh the centennial of Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address—not the centennial of the Disciples, but only the centennial of Campbell's document for ecclesiastical independence and Christian union. The Disciples' centennial lies two decades beyond us. However, at the

Pittsburgh convention, 30,000 people sat down together in Forbes Field for the observance of the Lord's Supper on Sunday afternoon, but the significant feature of the centennial celebration was that it registered the drift back towards Christian union as the chief mission of the Disciples.

In 1890, at the National Convention in Des Moines, a standing committee on Church union was appointed and at the National Convention of 1891 at Allegheny it made an encouraging report. A joint committee of Baptists and Disciples presented a report at the National Convention at Richmond, in 1894, and other events have indicated the purpose of the Disciples until, at the National Convention in 1910, at Topeka, a commission on Christian union was appointed.

At the same time that the Disciples were appointing their commission and without any knowledge of what others were doing, the Episcopalians in their General Convention in Cincinnati and the Congregationalists in their National Council in Boston, were appointing similar commissions, while the Synod of the Dioceses of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania appointed likewise at the same time a committee to "watch for and, if possible, take advantage of any opportunity which may be offered for further conference with other religious bodies with a view to a better understanding

of our mutual position and the furtherance of union among Christians." It is the Holy Spirit's leading for the peace of Zion without giving the leadership to any special communion.

With a history of eighty years and a membership of 1,300,000 the Disciples have not, however, brought into full coöperation all that compose their family. Some are conscientiously opposed to coöperative missionary work as done by the national societies, and with that opposition also opposition to instrumental music in Churches. The strength of these is largely in Tennessee and Texas. In other instances, like in England, the American and English policies do not always harmonize, and the older Churches pursue the simpler methods with the elders doing the preaching and the minister serving as the evangelist for the district. To these the present Chancellor of the Exchequer of England, Lloyd George, belongs, but the spirit of the Disciples allows the widest liberty in methods. Its test is Jesus Christ and obedience to Him. Their message has found friends among all classes and races—the man at the plow and the scientist in the laboratory, the mechanic and the scholar, the Caucasian and the Mongolian. Their men have sat in the presidential chair of the nation and in the cabinet, on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States and in both branches of Congress, in state judicia-

ries and servants in every department of public life. They have rendered worthy service to the nations where they have held their citizenship.

All things have their danger side, not necessarily because of the thing itself, but because of our common disposition, like the first Adam, to taste of some other fruit in the garden. Christianity itself has been abused by departures. Locke's philosophy was made the way to deism by Thomas Hume sincerely seeking the way for truth, while to Berkeley it became the path to the theory of the non-existence of matter. Jefferson sensibly interpreted the teachings of Rousseau in the American Declaration of Independence, while Robespierre, Couthon and Saint-Just carried them to legalistic extremes in France and precipitated the Reign of Terror. Campbell's interpretation of the Bible has been conscientiously used by many to lead the way to crass legalism—not unlike the history of the Franciscans and other religious movements in the Church. It has always been a large element among the Disciples and it has unconsciously produced exclusiveness on their part and sometimes unfriendliness on the part of other communions, but the sky is wide and a new atmosphere is filling the world. Sectarianism is crumbling, whether it be among the Disciples or other communions. The older men have unselfishly given their lives to this cause

as they saw it, and every year brings ripening conditions.

The history of all reformations has been amid toils, anathemas, heartaches and misrepresentations. Religious liberty and spirituality of worship in every period of history have come up through hardships. With the memory of no wounds and with that exquisite motto on the Italian sun-dial: "I take note only of the shining hours," the Disciples still have their faces set for the union of the Church in order that the world may believe that Jesus is the Christ. To obtain closer access both to His sacred heart and to all who believe in Him, the Bible must be the basis of our approach—the Bible freed from every remnant of systems of theology—and the history of the Disciples has no higher desire than to be a voice calling for peace in the divided house of God.

O God of Peace, Thou art a witness to the divisions in Thy house which we have made by our constant quarrels, and we acknowledge our transgression. Give us the hope of the morning by a genuine desire for fellowship with Thy whole Church, for we are brothers, feeling our way towards Thee and towards each other. Only in Thy light can we find the way. Without Thy shield we are incompetent to render Thee service

in the day of battle and danger. Thou hast created us in Thine image, redeemed us by Thy blood, made our bodies sanctuaries for Thy Holy Spirit, and we desire that oneness among ourselves for which Thou didst plan in the ages past, even as Thou didst plan for the gift of Thine only begotten Son. In the spirit of humility and faith we supplicate Thee for patience, courtesy and brotherliness. Then we shall love in spite of our failures and we shall reach the summit as our brothers of other communions climb to the heights. To Thee be all the praise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Appendix

Appendix

The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery

FOR where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all, while the testator liveth. Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.—*Scripture.*

THE PRESBYTERY OF SPRINGFIELD, sitting at Cane Ridge, in the county of Bourbon, Ky., being, through a gracious Providence, in more than ordinary bodily health, growing in strength and size daily and in perfect soundness and composure of mind; but knowing that it is appointed for all delegated bodies once to die and considering that the life of every such body is very uncertain, do make and ordain this our last Will and Testament, in manner and form following, viz.:

Imprimis. We *will* that this body die, be dissolved and sink into union with the body of Christ at large; for there is but one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.

Item. We *will* that our name of distinction with its *Reverend* title be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage and his name One.

Item. We *will* that our power of making laws for the government of the Church and executing them by delegated authority forever cease, that the people may have free course to the Bible and adopt the *law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.*

Item. We *will* that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy Scriptures with fervent prayer and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, *with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,* without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men or the rudiments of the world. And let none henceforth take *this honour to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron.*

Item. We *will* that the Church of Christ resume her native right of internal government—try her candidates for the ministry, as to their soundness in the faith, acquaintance with experimental religion, gravity and aptness to teach; and admit no other proof of their authority but Christ speaking in them. We will that the Church of Christ look up to the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest; and that she resume her primitive right of trying those *who say they are apostles and are not.*

Item. We *will* that each particular Church as a body, actuated by the same spirit, choose her own preacher and support him by a free will offering, without a written *call* or *subscription,* admit members, remove offenses, and never henceforth *delegate* her right of government to any man or set of men whatever.

Item. We *will* that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose, for it is better to enter into life having one book than having many to be cast into hell.

Item. We *will* that preachers and people cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance, pray more and dispute less, and while they behold the signs of the times, look up and confidently expect that redemption draweth nigh.

Item. We *will* that our weak brethren who may have been wishing to make the Presbytery of Springfield their king and wot not what is now become of it, betake themselves to the Rock of Ages and follow Jesus for the future.

Item. We *will* that the Synod of Kentucky examine every member who may be *suspected* of having departed from the Confession of

Faith and suspend every such suspected heretic immediately, in order that the oppressed may go free and taste the sweets of gospel liberty.

Item. We *will* that Ja—— ———, the author of two letters lately published in Lexington, be encouraged in his zeal to destroy *partyism.* We will, moreover, that our past conduct be examined into by all who may have correct information; but let foreigners beware of speaking evil of things which they know not.

Item. Finally we *will* that all our *sister bodies* read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined and prepare for death before it is too late.

Springfield Presbytery } L. S.
June 28th, 1804. }

ROBERT MARSHALL,
JOHN DUNLAVY,
RICHARD M'NEMAR,
B. W. STONE,
JOHN THOMPSON,
DAVID PURVIANCE,
} Witnesses.

The Witnesses' Address

We, the above named witnesses of the Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery, knowing that there will be many conjectures respecting the causes which have occasioned the dissolution of that body, think proper to testify that from its first existence it was knit together in love, lived in peace and concord and died a voluntary and happy death.

Their reasons for dissolving that body were the following: With deep concern they viewed the divisions and party spirit among professing Christians, principally owing to the adoption of human creeds and forms of government. While they were united under the name of a Presbytery, they endeavoured to cultivate a spirit of love and unity with all Christians; but found it extremely difficult to suppress the idea that they themselves were a party separate from others. This difficulty increased in proportion to their success in the ministry. Jealousies were excited in the minds of other denominations and a temptation was laid before those who were connected with the various parties to view them in the same light. At their last meeting they undertook to prepare for the press a piece entitled Observa-

tions on Church Government, in which the world will see the beautiful simplicity of Christian Church government, stript of human inventions and lordly traditions. As they proceeded in the investigation of that subject, they soon found that there was neither precept nor example in the New Testament for such confederacies as modern Church Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, General Assemblies, etc. Hence they concluded, that while they continued in the connection in which they then stood, they were off the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which Christ Himself is the chief corner stone. However just, therefore, their views of Church government might have been, they would have gone out under the name and sanction of a self-constituted body. Therefore from a principle of love to Christians of every name, the precious cause of Jesus and dying sinners who are kept from the Lord by the existence of sects and parties in the Church, they have cheerfully consented to retire from the din and fury of conflicting parties—sink out of the view of fleshly minds and die the death. They believe their death will be great gain to the world. But though dead, as above, and stript of their mortal frame, which only served to keep them too near the confines of Egyptian bondage, they yet live and speak in the land of gospel liberty; they blow the trumpet of jubilee and willingly devote themselves to the help of the Lord against the mighty. They will aid the brethren by their counsel when required, assist in ordaining elders or pastors, seek the divine blessing, unite with all Christians, commune together and strengthen each others' hands in the work of the Lord.

We design, by the grace of God, to continue in the exercise of those functions which belong to us as ministers of the Gospel, confidently trusting in the Lord that He will be with us. We candidly acknowledge that in some things we may err through human infirmity; but He will correct our wanderings and preserve His Church. Let all Christians join with us in crying to God day and night to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of His work, and give Him no rest till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. We heartily unite with our Christian brethren of every name, in thanksgiving to God for the display of His goodness in the glorious work He is carrying on in our Western country, which we hope will terminate in the universal spread of the Gospel and the unity of the Church.

A Declaration and Address

FROM the series of events which have taken place in the Churches for many years past, especially in this Western country, as well as from what we know in general of the present state of things in the Christian world, we are persuaded that it is high time for us not only to think, but also to act, for ourselves; to see with our own eyes, and to take all our measures directly and immediately from the divine standard; to this alone we feel ourselves divinely bound to be conformed, as by this alone we must be judged. We are also persuaded that as no man can be *judged* for his brother, so no man can *judge* for his brother; every man must be allowed to judge for himself, as every man must bear his own judgment—must give account of himself to God. We are also of opinion that as the divine word is equally binding upon all, so all lie under an equal obligation to be bound by it, and it alone; and not by any human interpretation of it; and that, therefore, no man has a right to judge his brother, except in so far as he manifestly violates the express letter of the law. That every such judgment is an express violation of the law of Christ, a daring usurpation of His Throne, and a gross intrusion upon the rights and liberties of His subjects. We are, therefore, of opinion that we should beware of such things; that we should keep at the utmost distance from everything of this nature; and that, knowing the judgment of God against them that commit such things, we should neither do the same ourselves, nor take pleasure in them that do them. Moreover, being well aware, from sad experience, of the heinous nature and pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians; tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit, we would desire to be at rest; and, were it possible, we would also desire to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the Churches: as would restore unity, peace, and purity to the whole Church of God. This desirable rest, however, we utterly despair either to find for ourselves, or to be able to recommend to our brethren, by continuing amid the diversity and rancour of party

contentions, the veering uncertainty and clashings of human opinions: nor, indeed, can we reasonably expect to find it anywhere but in Christ and His simple word, which is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Our desire, therefore, for ourselves and our brethren would be, that, rejecting human opinions and the inventions of men as of any authority, or as having any place in the Church of God, we might forever cease from further contentions about such things; returning to and holding fast by the original standard; taking the divine word alone for our rule; the Holy Spirit for our teacher and guide, to lead us into all truth; and Christ alone, as exhibited in the word, for our salvation; that, by so doing, we may be at peace among ourselves, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Impressed with these sentiments, we have resolved as follows:

I. That we form ourselves into a religious association under the denomination of the Christian Association of Washington, for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men.

II. That each member, according to ability, cheerfully and liberally subscribe a certain specified sum, to be paid half yearly, for the purpose of raising a fund to support a pure Gospel ministry, that shall reduce to practice that whole form of doctrine, wôrship, discipline, and government, expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God. And, also, for supplying the poor with the holy Scriptures.

III. That this society consider it a duty, and shall use all proper means in its power, to encourage the formation of similar associations; and shall for this purpose hold itself in readiness, upon application, to correspond with, and render all possible assistance to, such as may desire to associate for the same desirable and important purposes.

IV. That this society by no means considers itself a Church, nor does at all assume to itself the powers peculiar to such a society; nor do the members, as such, consider themselves as standing connected in that relation; nor as at all associated for the peculiar purposes of Church association; but merely as voluntary advocates for Church reformation; and, as possessing the powers common to all individuals, who may please to associate in a peaceable and orderly manner, for any lawful purpose, namely, the disposal of their time, counsel and property, as they may see cause.

V. That this society, formed for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, shall, to the utmost of its power, countenance and support such ministers, and such only, as exhibit a manifest conformity to the original standard in conversation and doctrine, in zeal and diligence; only such as reduce to practice that simple original form of Christianity, expressly exhibited upon the sacred page; without attempting to inculcate anything of human authority, of private opinion, or inventions of men, as having any place in the constitution, faith, or worship, of the Christian Church, or anything as matter of Christian faith or duty, for which there cannot be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord," either in express terms, or by approved precedent.

VI. That a standing committee of twenty-one members of unexceptionable moral character, inclusive of the secretary and treasurer, be chosen annually to superintend the interests, and transact the business of the society. And that said committee be invested with full powers to act and do, in the name and behalf of their constituents, whatever the society had previously determined, for the purpose of carrying into effect the entire object of its institution, and that in case of any emergency, unprovided for in the existing determinations of the society, said committee be empowered to call a special meeting for that purpose.

VII. That this society meet at least twice a year, viz: on the first Thursday of May, and of November, and that the collectors appointed to receive the half-yearly quotas of the promised subscriptions be in readiness, at or before each meeting, to make their returns to the treasurer, that he may be able to report upon the state of the funds. The next meeting to be held at Washington on the first Thursday of November next.

VIII. That each meeting of the society be opened with a sermon, the constitution and address read, and a collection lifted for the benefit of the society; and that all communications of a public nature be laid before the society at its half-yearly meetings.

IX. That this society, relying upon the all-sufficiency of the Church's Head; and, through His grace, looking with an eye of confidence to the generous liberality of the sincere friends of genuine Christianity; holds itself engaged to afford a competent support to such ministers as the Lord may graciously dispose to assist, at the request, and by invitation of the society, in promoting a pure evan-

gelical reformation, by the simple preaching of the everlasting Gospel, and the administration of its ordinances in an exact conformity to the divine standard as aforesaid; and that, therefore, whatever the friends of the institution shall please to contribute towards the support of ministers in connection with this society, who may be sent forth to preach at considerable distances, the same shall be gratefully received and acknowledged as a donation to its funds.

Address Etc.

To all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, throughout all the Churches, the following Address is most respectfully submitted:

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

That it is the grand design and native tendency of our holy religion to reconcile and unite men to God, and to each other, in truth and love, to the glory of God, and their own present and eternal good, will not, we presume, be denied, by any of the genuine subjects of Christianity. The nativity of its divine Author was announced from heaven, by a host of angels, with high acclamations of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will towards men." The whole tenor of that divine book which contains its institutes, in all its gracious declarations, precepts, ordinances, and holy examples, most expressively and powerfully inculcates this. In so far, then, as this holy unity and unanimity in faith and love is attained, just in the same degree is the glory of God and the happiness of men promoted and secured. Impressed with those sentiments, and, at the same time, grievously affected with those sad divisions which have so awfully interfered with the benign and gracious intention of our holy religion, by exciting its professed subjects to bite and devour one another, we cannot suppose ourselves justifiable in withholding the mite of our sincere and humble endeavours to heal and remove them.

What awful and distressing effects have those sad divisions produced! what aversions, what reproaches, what backbitings, what evil surmisings, what angry contentions, what enmities, what ex-

communications, and even persecution ! ! ! And, indeed, this must, in some measure, continue to be the case so long as those schisms exist; for, saith the apostle, where envying and strife is, *there* is confusion and every evil work. What dreary effects of those accursed divisions are to be seen, even in this highly favoured country, where the sword of the civil magistrate has not as yet learned to serve at the altar. Have we not seen congregations broken to pieces, neighbourhoods of professing Christians first thrown into confusion by party contentions, and, in the end, entirely deprived of Gospel ordinances; while, in the meantime, large settlements and tracts of country remain to this day entirely destitute of a Gospel ministry, many of them in little better than a state of heathenism, the Churches being either so weakened with divisions that they cannot send them ministers, or the people so divided among themselves that they will not receive them. Several, at the same time, who live at the door of a preached Gospel, dare not in conscience go to hear it, and, of course, enjoy little more advantage, in that respect, than if living in the midst of heathens. How seldom do many in those circumstances enjoy the dispensations of the Lord's Supper, that great ordinance of unity and love. How sadly, also, does this broken and confused state of things interfere with that spiritual intercourse among Christians, one with another, which is so essential to their edification and comfort, in the midst of a present evil world; so divided in sentiment, and, of course, living at such distances, that but few of the same opinion, or party, can conveniently and frequently assemble for religious purposes, or enjoy a due frequency of ministerial attentions. And even where things are in a better state with respect to settled Churches, how is the tone of discipline relaxed under the influence of a party spirit; many being afraid to exercise it with due strictness, lest their people should leave them, and, under the cloak of some specious pretense, find refuge in the bosom of another party; while, lamentable to be told, so corrupted is the Church with those accursed divisions, that there are but few so base as not to find admission into some professing party or other. Thus, in a great measure, is that Scriptural purity of communion banished from the Church of God, upon the due preservation of which much of her comfort, glory, and usefulness depend. To complete the dread result of our woful divisions, one evil yet remains, of a very awful nature: the divine displeasure justly provoked with this sad per-

version of the Gospel of peace, the Lord withholds His gracious influential presence from His ordinances, and not unfrequently gives up the contentious authors and abettors of religious discord to fall into grievous scandals, or visits them with judgments, as He did the house of Eli. Thus, while professing Christians bite and devour one another, they are consumed one of another, or fall a prey to the righteous judgments of God; meantime, the truly religious of all parties are grieved, the weak stumbled, the graceless and profane hardened, the mouths of infidels opened to blaspheme religion, and thus the only thing under heaven divinely efficacious to promote and secure the present spiritual and eternal good of man, even the Gospel of the blessed Jesus, is reduced to contempt, while multitudes, deprived of a Gospel ministry, as has been observed, fall an easy prey to seducers, and so become the dupes of almost unheard-of delusions. Are not such the visible effects of our sad divisions, even in this otherwise happy country? Say, dear brethren, are not these things so? Is it not then your incumbent duty to endeavour, by all Scriptural means, to have those evils remedied? Who will say that it is not? And does it not peculiarly belong to *you*, who occupy the place of Gospel ministers, to be leaders in this laudable undertaking? Much depends upon *your* hearty concurrence and zealous endeavours. The favourable opportunity which divine Providence has put into your hands, in this happy country, for the accomplishment of so great a good, is, in itself, a consideration of no small encouragement. A country happily exempted from the baneful influence of a civil establishment of any peculiar form of Christianity; from under the direct influence of the antichristian hierarchy; and, at the same time, from any formal connection with the devoted nations that have given their strength and power unto the beast; in which, of course, no adequate reformation can be accomplished, until the word of God be fulfilled, and the vials of His wrath poured out upon them. Happy exemption, indeed, from being the object of such awful judgments. Still more happy will it be for us if we duly esteem and improve those great advantages, for the high and valuable ends for which they are manifestly given, and sure where much is given, much also will be required. Can the Lord expect, or require, anything less from a people in such unhampered circumstances—from a people so liberally furnished with all means and mercies, than a thorough reformation in all things, civil and religious, according to His word? Why should we sup

pose it? And would not such an improvement of our precious privileges be equally conducive to the glory of God, and our own present and everlasting good? The auspicious phenomena of the times furnish collateral arguments of a very encouraging nature, that our dutiful and pious endeavours shall not be in vain in the Lord. Is it not the day of the Lord's vengeance upon the antichristian world—the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion? Surely, then, the time to favour her is come; even the set time. And is it not said that Zion shall be built in troublous times? Have not greater efforts been made, and more done, for the promulgation of the Gospel among the nations, since the commencement of the French revolution, than had been for many centuries prior to that event? And have not the Churches, both in Europe and America, since that period, discovered a more than usual concern for the removal of contentions, for the healing of divisions, for the restoration of a Christian and brotherly intercourse one with another, and for the promotion of each other's spiritual good, as the printed documents upon those subjects amply testify? Should *we* not, then, be excited by these considerations to concur with all our might, to help forward this good work; that what yet remains to be done, may be fully accomplished. And what though the well-meant endeavours after union have not, in some instances, entirely succeeded to the wish of all parties, should this dissuade us from the attempt? Indeed, should Christians cease to contend earnestly for the sacred articles of faith and duty once delivered to the saints, on account of the opposition and scanty success which, in many instances, attend their faithful and honest endeavours; the divine cause of truth and righteousness might have long ago been relinquished. And is there anything more formidable in the Goliah schism, than in many other evils which Christians have to combat? Or, has the Captain of Salvation sounded a desist from pursuing, or proclaimed a truce with this deadly enemy that is sheathing its sword in the very bowels of His Church, rending and mangling His mystical body into pieces? Has he said to his servants, Let it alone? If not, where is the warrant for a cessation of endeavours to have it removed? On the other hand are we not the better instructed by sage experience, how to proceed in this business, having before our eyes the inadvertencies and mistakes of others, which have hitherto, in many instances, prevented the desired success? Thus taught by experience, and happily furnished with the accumu-

lated instructions of those that have gone before us, earnestly labouring in this good cause, let us take unto ourselves the whole armour of God, and, having our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, let us stand fast by this important duty with all perseverance. Let none that love the peace of Zion be discouraged, much less offended, because that an object of such magnitude does not, in the first instance, come forth recommended by the express suffrage of the mighty or the many. This consideration, if duly weighed, will neither give offense, nor yield discouragement to any one that considers the nature of the thing in question in connection with what has been already suggested. Is it not a matter of universal right, a duty equally belonging to every citizen of Zion, to seek her good? In this respect, no one can claim a preference above his fellows, as to any peculiar, much less exclusive obligation. And, as for authority, it can have no place in this business; for, surely, none can suppose themselves invested with a divine right, as to anything peculiarly belonging to them, to call the attention of their brethren to this dutiful and important undertaking. For our part, we entertain no such arrogant presumption; nor are we inclined to impute the thought to any of our brethren, that this good work should be let alone till such time as they may think proper to come forward and sanction the attempt, by their invitation and example. It is an open field, an extensive work, to which all are equally welcome, equally invited.

Should we speak of competency, viewing the greatness of the object, and the manifold difficulties which lie in the way of its accomplishment; we would readily exclaim, with the apostle, Who is sufficient for these things? But, upon recollecting ourselves, neither would *we* be discouraged; persuaded with him, that, as the work in which we are engaged, so, likewise, *our* sufficiency is of God. But, after all, both the mighty and the many are with us. The Lord Himself, and all that are truly His people, are declaredly on our side. The prayers of all the Churches, nay, the prayers of Christ Himself (John xvii. 20, 23), and of all that have ascended to His heavenly kingdom, are with us. The blessing out of Zion is pronounced upon our undertaking. "Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." With such encouragements as these, what should deter us from the heavenly enterprise, or render hopeless the attempt of accomplishing, in due time, an entire union of all the Churches in faith and practice, according to the word of God? Not

that we judge ourselves competent to effect such a thing; we utterly disclaim the thought; but we judge it our bounden duty to make the attempt, by using all due means in our power to promote it; and also, that we have sufficient reason to rest assured that our humble and well-meant endeavours shall not be in vain in the Lord.

The cause that we advocate is not our own peculiar cause, nor the cause of any party, considered as such; it is a common cause, the cause of Christ and our brethren of all denominations. All that we presume, then, is to do what we humbly conceive to be *our* duty, in connection with our brethren; to each of whom it equally belongs, as to us, to exert himself for this blessed purpose. And as we have no just reason to doubt the concurrence of our brethren to accomplish an object so desirable in itself, and fraught with such happy consequences, so neither can we look forward to that happy event which will forever put an end to our hapless divisions, and restore to the Church its primitive unity, purity, and prosperity, but in the pleasing prospect of their hearty and dutiful concurrence.

Dearly beloved brethren, why should *we* deem it a thing incredible that the Church of Christ, in this highly favoured country, should resume that original unity, peace, and purity which belong to its constitution, and constitute its glory? Or, is there anything that can be justly deemed necessary for this desirable purpose, both to conform to the model and adopt the practice of the primitive Church, expressly exhibited in the New Testament? Whatever alterations this might produce in any or in all of the Churches, should, we think, neither be deemed inadmissible nor ineligible. Surely such alteration would be every way for the better, and not for the worse, unless we should suppose the divinely inspired rule to be faulty, or defective. Were we, then, in our Church constitution and managements, to exhibit a complete conformity to the apostolic Church, would we not be, in that respect, as perfect as Christ intended we should be? And should not this suffice us?

It is, to us, a pleasing consideration that all the Churches of Christ which mutually acknowledge each other as such, are not only agreed in the great doctrines of faith and holiness, but are also materially agreed as to the positive ordinances of the Gospel institution; so that our differences, at most, are about the things in which the kingdom of God does not consist, that is, about matters of private opinion or human invention. What a pity that the kingdom of God should

be divided about such things! Who, then, would not be the first among us to give up human inventions in the worship of God, and to cease from imposing his private opinions upon his brethren, that our breaches might *thus* be healed? Who would not willingly conform to the original pattern laid down in the New Testament, for *this* happy purpose? Our dear brethren of all denominations will please to consider that we have our educational prejudices and particular customs to struggle against as well as they. But this we do sincerely declare, that there is nothing we have hitherto received as matter of faith or practice which is not expressly taught and enjoined in the word of God, either in express terms or approved precedent, that we would not heartily relinquish, that so we might return to the original constitutional unity of the Christian Church; and, in this happy unity, enjoy full communion with all our brethren, in peace and charity. The like dutiful condescension we candidly expect of all that are seriously impressed with a sense of the duty they owe to God, to each other, and to their perishing brethren of mankind. To this we call, we invite, our brethren of all denominations, by all the sacred motives which we have avouched as the impulsive reasons of our thus addressing them.

You are all, dear brethren, equally included as the objects of our love and esteem. With you all we desire to unite in the bonds of an entire Christian unity—Christ alone being the *head*, the centre, His word the *rule;* an explicit belief of, and manifest conformity to it, in all things—*the terms*. More than this, you will not require of us; and less we cannot require of you; nor, indeed, can we reasonably suppose any would desire it, for what good purpose would it serve? We dare neither assume nor propose the trite indefinite distinction between essentials and non-essentials, in matters of revealed truth and duty; firmly persuaded, that, whatever may be their comparative importance, simply considered, the high obligation of the divine authority revealing, or enjoining them, renders the belief or performance of them absolutely essential to us, in so far as we know them. And to be ignorant of anything God has revealed, can neither be our duty nor our privilege. We humbly presume, then, dear brethren, you can have no relevant objection to meet us upon this ground. And, we again beseech you, let it be known that it is the invitation of but few; by your accession we shall be many; and whether few, or many, in the first

instance, it is all one with respect to the event which must ultimately await the full information and hearty concurrence of all. Besides, whatever is to be done, must begin, some time, some where; and no matter where, nor by whom, if the Lord puts His hand to the work, it must surely prosper. And has He not been graciously pleased, upon many signal occasions, to bring to pass the greatest events from very small beginnings, and even by means the most unlikely? Duty then is ours; but events belong to God.

We hope, then, what we urge will neither be deemed an unreasonable nor an unseasonable undertaking. Why should it be thought unseasonable? Can any time be assigned, while things continue as they are, that would prove more favourable for such an attempt, or what could be supposed to make it so? Might it be the approximation of parties to a greater nearness, in point of public profession and similarity of customs? Or might it be expected from a gradual decline of bigotry? As to the former, it is a well known fact, that where the difference is least, the opposition is always managed with a degree of vehemence inversely proportioned to the merits of the cause. With respect to the latter, though we are happy to say, that in some cases and places, and, we hope, universally, bigotry is upon the decline; yet we are not warranted, either by the past or present, to act upon that supposition. We have, as yet, by this means seen no such effect produced; nor indeed could we reasonably expect it; for there will always be multitudes of weak persons in the Church, and these are generally most subject to bigotry; add to this, that while divisions exist, there will always be found interested men who will not fail to support them; nor can we at all suppose that Satan will be idle to improve an advantage so important to the interests of his kingdom. And, let it be further observed upon the whole, that, in matters of similar importance to our secular interests, we would by no means content ourselves with such kind of reasoning. We might further add, that the attempt here suggested not being of a partial, but of general nature, it can have no just tendency to excite the jealousy, or hurt the feelings of any party. On the contrary, every effort towards a permanent Scriptural unity among the Churches, upon the solid basis of universally acknowledged and self-evident truths, must have the happiest tendency to enlighten and conciliate, by thus manifesting to each other their mutual charity and zeal for the truth: "Whom I love in the truth," saith the apostle, "and not

I only, but also all they that have known the truth; for the truth's sake, which is in us, and shall be with us forever." Indeed, if no such divine and adequate basis of union can be fairly exhibited, as will meet the approbation of every upright and intelligent Christian, nor such mode of procedure adopted in favour of the weak as will not oppress their consciences, then the accomplishment of this grand object upon principle must be forever impossible. There would, upon this supposition, remain no other way of accomplishing it, but merely by voluntary compromise, and good-natured accommodation. That such a thing, however, will be accomplished, one way or other, will not be questioned by any that allow themselves to believe that the commands and prayers of our Lord Jesus Christ will not utterly prove ineffectual. Whatever way, then, it is to be effected, whether upon the solid basis of divinely revealed truth, or the good-natured principle of Christian forbearance and gracious condescension, is it not equally practicable, equally eligible to us, as ever it can be to any; unless we should suppose ourselves destitute of that Christian temper and discernment which is essentially necessary to qualify us to do the will of our gracious Redeemer, whose expressed command to His people is, that there be "no divisions among them; but that they all walk by the same rule, speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment"? We believe then it is as practicable as it is eligible. Let us attempt it. "Up, and be doing, and the Lord will be with us."

Are we not all praying for that happy event, when there shall be but one fold, as there is but one chief Shepherd? What! shall we pray for a thing, and not strive to obtain it! ! not use the necessary means to have it accomplished! ! What said the Lord to Moses upon a piece of conduct somewhat similar? "Why criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward, but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand." Let the ministers of Jesus but embrace this exhortation, put their hand to the work, and encourage the people to go forward upon the firm ground of obvious truth, to unite in the bonds of an entire Christian unity; and who will venture to say that it would not soon be accomplished? "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of My people," saith your God. To you, therefore, it peculiarly belongs, as the professed and acknowledged leaders of the people, to go before them in this good work, to remove human

opinions and the inventions of men out of the way, by carefully separating this chaff from the pure wheat of primary and authentic revelation; casting out that assumed authority, that enacting and decreeing power by which those things have been imposed and established. To this ministerial department, then, do we look with anxiety. Ministers of Jesus, you can neither be ignorant of nor unaffected with the divisions and corruptions of His Church. His dying commands, His last and ardent prayers for the visible unity of His professing people, will not suffer you to be indifferent in this matter. You will not, you cannot, therefore, be silent upon a subject of such vast importance to His personal glory and the happiness of His people —consistently you cannot; for silence gives consent. You will rather lift up your voice like a trumpet to expose the heinous nature and dreadful consequences of those unnatural and antichristian divisions, which have so rent and ruined the Church of God. Thus, in justice to your station and character, honoured of the Lord, would we hopefully anticipate your zealous and faithful efforts to heal the breaches of Zion; that God's dear children might dwell together in unity and love; but if otherwise . . . we forbear to utter it. (See Mal. ii. 1–10.)

Oh! that ministers and people would but consider that there are no divisions in the grave, nor in that world which lies beyond it! there our divisions must come to an end! we must all unite there! Would to God we could find in our hearts to put an end to our short-lived divisions here; that so we might leave a blessing behind us; even a happy and united Church. What gratification, what utility, in the meantime, can our divisions afford either to ministers or people? Should they be perpetuated till the day of judgment, would they convert one sinner from the error of his ways, or save a soul from death? Have they any tendency to hide the multitude of sins that are so dishonourable to God, and hurtful to His people? Do they not rather irritate and produce them? How innumerable and highly aggravated are the sins they have produced, and are at this day producing, both among professors and profane. We entreat, we beseech you then, dear brethren, by all those considerations, to concur in this blessed and dutiful attempt. What is the work of all, must be done by all. Such was the work of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Such is the work to which you are called, not by the authority of man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the

Father, who raised Him from the dead. By this authority are you called to raise up the tabernacle of David, that is fallen down among us, and to set it up upon its own base. This you cannot do, while you run every man to his own house, and consult only the interests of his own party. Until you associate, consult, and advise together, and in a friendly and Christian manner explore the subject, nothing can be done. We would, therefore, with all due deference and submission, call the attention of our brethren to the obvious and important duty of association. Unite with us in the common cause of simple evangelical Christianity; in this glorious cause we are ready to unite with you. United we shall prevail. It is the cause of Christ, and of our brethren throughout all the Churches, of catholic unity, peace, and purity; a cause that must finally prosper in spite of all opposition. Let us unite to promote it. Come forward, then, dear brethren, and help with us. Do not suffer yourselves to be lulled asleep by that syren song of the slothful and reluctant professor: "The time is not yet come, the time is not come, saith he; the time that the Lord's house should be built." Believe him not. Do ye not discern the signs of the times? Have not the two witnesses arisen from their state of political death, from under the long proscription of ages? Have they not stood upon their feet, in the presence, and to the consternation and terror of their enemies? Has not their resurrection been accompanied with a great earthquake? Has not the tenth part of the great city been thrown down by it? Has not this event aroused the nations to indignation? Have they not been angry, yea, very angry? Therefore, O Lord, is Thy wrath come upon them, and the time of the dead that they should be avenged, and that Thou shouldest give reward to Thy servants the prophets, and to them that fear Thy name, both small and great; and that Thou shouldest destroy them that have destroyed the earth. Who among us has not heard the report of these things, of these lightnings and thunderings and voices; of this tremendous earthquake and great hail; of these awful convulsions and revolutions that have dashed and are dashing to pieces the nations, like a potter's vessel? Yea, have not the remote vibrations of this dreadful shock been felt even by us, whom God has graciously placed at so great a distance?

What shall we say to these things? Is it time for us to sit still in our corruptions and divisions, when the Lord, by His word and prov-

idence, is so loudly and expressly calling us to repentance, and reformation? "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust, O Jerusalem; arise, loose thyself from the *bands* of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." Resume that precious, that dear-bought liberty, wherewith Christ has made His people free; a liberty from subjection to any authority but His own, in matters of religion. Call no man father, no man master on earth; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Stand fast, therefore, in this precious liberty, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. For the vindication of this precious liberty have we declared ourselves hearty and willing advocates. For this benign and dutiful purpose have we associated, that by so doing we might contribute the mite of our humble endeavours to promote it, and thus invite our brethren to do the same. As the first-fruits of our efforts for this blessed purpose we respectfully present to their consideration the following propositions, relying upon their charity and candour that they will neither despise nor misconstrue our humble and adventurous attempt. If they should in any measure serve, as a preliminary, to open up the way to a permanent Scriptural unity among the friends and lovers of truth and peace throughout the Churches, we shall greatly rejoice at it. We by no means pretend to dictate, and could we propose anything more evident, consistent, and adequate, it should be at their service. Their pious and dutiful attention to an object of such magnitude will induce them to communicate to us their emendations; and thus what is sown in weakness will be raised up in power. For certainly the collective graces that are conferred upon the Church, if duly united and brought to bear upon any point of commanded duty, would be amply sufficient for the right and successful performance of it. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the discerning of spirits: but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. As every man, therefore, hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." In the face, then, of such instructions, and with such assurances of an all-sufficiency of divine grace, as the

Church has received from her exalted Head, we can neither justly doubt the concurrence of her genuine members; nor yet their ability, when dutifully acting together, to accomplish anything that is necessary for His glory, and their own good; and certainly their visible unity in truth and holiness, in faith and love, is, of all things, the most conducive to both these, if we may credit the dying commands and prayers of our gracious Lord. In a matter, therefore, of such confessed importance, our Christian brethren, however unhappily distinguished by party names, will not, cannot, withhold their helping hand. We are as heartily willing to be their debtors, as they are indispensably bound to be our benefactors. Come, then, dear brethren, we most humbly beseech you, cause your light to shine upon our weak beginnings, that we may see to work by it. Evince your zeal for the glory of Christ, and the spiritual welfare of your fellow-Christians, by your hearty and zealous co-operation to promote the unity, purity, and prosperity of His Church.

Let none imagine that the subjoined propositions are at all intended as an overture towards a new creed or standard for the Church, or as in any wise designed to be made a term of communion; nothing can be further from our intention. They are merely designed for opening up the way, that we may come fairly and firmly to original ground upon clear and certain premises, and take up things just as the apostles left them; that thus disentangled from the accruing embarrassments of intervening ages, we may stand with evidence upon the same ground on which the Church stood at the beginning. Having said so much to solicit attention and prevent mistake, we submit as follows:

PROP. 1. That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.

2. That although the Church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions among them. They ought to receive each other as Christ Jesus hath also received them, to the glory of God. And for this purpose they ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak

the same thing; and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

3. That in order to do this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted, as of divine obligation, in their Church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles upon the New Testament Church; either in expressed terms or by approved precedent.

4. That although the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are inseparably connected, making together but one perfect and entire revelation of the divine will, for the edification and salvation of the Church, and, therefore, in that respect cannot be separated; yet as to what directly and properly belongs to their immediate object, the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline, and government of the Old Testament Church, and the particular duties of its members.

5. That with respect to the commands and ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, where the Scriptures are silent as to the express time or manner of performance, if any such there be, no human authority has power to interfere, in order to supply the supposed deficiency by making laws for the Church; nor can anything more be required of Christians in such cases, but only that they *so* observe these commands and ordinances as will evidently answer the declared and obvious end of their institution. Much less has any human authority power to impose new commands or ordinances upon the Church, which our Lord Jesus Christ has not enjoined. Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the Church, or be made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.

6. That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore, no such de-

ductions can be made terms of communion, but do properly belong to the after and progressive edification of the Church. Hence, it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession.

7. That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of divine truths, and defensive testimonies in opposition to prevailing errors, be highly expedient, and the more full and explicit they be for those purposes, the better; yet, as these must be in a great measure the effect of human reasoning, and of course must contain many inferential truths, they ought not to be made terms of Christian communion; unless we suppose, what is contrary to fact, that none have a right to the communion of the Church, but such as possess a very clear and decisive judgment, or are come to a very high degree of doctrinal information; whereas the Church from the beginning did, and ever will, consist of little children and young men, as well as fathers.

8. That as it is not necessary that persons should have a particular knowledge or distinct apprehension of all divinely revealed truths in order to entitle them to a place in the Church; neither should they, for this purpose, be required to make a profession more extensive than their knowledge; but that, on the contrary, their having a due measure of Scriptural self-knowledge respecting their lost and perishing condition by nature and practice, and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, accompanied with a profession of their faith in and obedience to Him, in all things, according to His word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into His Church.

9. That all that are enabled through grace to make such a profession, and to manifest the reality of it in their tempers and conduct, should consider each other as the precious saints of God, should love each other as brethren, children of the same family and Father, temples of the same Spirit, members of the same body, subjects of the same grace, objects of the same divine love, bought with the same price, and joint-heirs of the same inheritance. Whom God hath thus joined together no man should dare to put asunder.

10. That division among the Christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils. It is antichristian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ; as if He were divided against Himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of Himself. It is antiscriptural,

as being strictly prohibited by His sovereign authority; a direct violation of His express command. It is antinatural, as it excites Christians to contemn, to hate and to oppose one another, who are bound by the highest and most endearing obligations to love each other as brethren, even as Christ has loved them. In a word, it is productive of confusion and of every evil work.

11. That (in some instances) a partial neglect of the expressly revealed will of God, and (in others) an assumed authority for making the approbation of human opinions and human inventions a term of communion, by introducing them into the constitution, faith, or worship of the Church, are, and have been, the immediate, obvious, and universally acknowledged causes, of all the corruptions and divisions that ever have taken place in the Church of God.

12. That all that is necessary to the highest state of perfection and purity of the Church upon earth is, first, that none be received as members but such as having that due measure of Scriptural self-knowledge described above, do profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures; nor, secondly, that any be retained in her communion longer than they continue to manifest the reality of their profession by their temper and conduct. Thirdly, that her ministers, duly and Scripturally qualified, inculcate none other things than those very articles of faith and holiness expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God. Lastly, that in all their administrations they keep close by the observance of all divine ordinances, after the example of the primitive Church, exhibited in the New Testament; without any additions whatsoever of human opinions or inventions of men.

13. Lastly. That if any circumstantials indispensably necessary to the observance of divine ordinances be not found upon the page of express revelation, such, and such only, as are absolutely necessary for this purpose should be adopted under the title of human expedients, without any pretense to a more sacred origin, so that any subsequent alteration or difference in the observance of these things might produce no contention nor division in the Church.

From the nature and construction of these propositions, it will evidently appear, that they are laid in a designed subserviency to the declared end of our association; and are exhibited for the express purpose of performing a duty of previous necessity, a duty loudly called for in existing circumstances at the hand of every one that

would desire to promote the interests of Zion; a duty not only enjoined, as has been already observed from Isaiah lvii. 14, but which is also there predicted of the faithful remnant as a thing in which they would voluntarily engage. "He that putteth his trust in Me shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain; and shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way; take up the stumbling-block out of the way of My people." To prepare the way for a permanent Scriptural unity among Christians, by calling up to their consideration fundamental truths, directing their attention to first principles, clearing the way before them by removing the stumbling-blocks—the rubbish of ages, which has been thrown upon it, and fencing it on each side, that in advancing towards the desired object they may not miss the way through mistake or inadvertency, by turning aside to the right hand or to the left, is, at least, the sincere intention of the above propositions. It remains with our brethren now to say, how far they go towards answering this intention. Do they exhibit truths demonstrably evident in the light of Scripture and right reason, so that to deny any part of them the contrary assertion would be manifestly absurd and inadmissible? Considered as a preliminary for the above purpose, are they adequate, so that if acted upon, they would infallibly lead to the desired issue? If evidently defective in either of these respects, let them be corrected and amended, till they become sufficiently evident, adequate, and unexceptionable. In the meantime let them be examined with rigour, with all the rigour that justice, candour, and charity will admit. If we have mistaken the way, we shall be glad to be set right; but if, in the meantime, we have been happily led to suggest obvious and undeniable truths, which, if adopted and acted upon, would infallibly lead to the desired unity, and secure it when obtained, we hope it will be no objection that they have not proceeded from a General Council. It is not the voice of the multitude, but the voice of truth, that has power with the conscience; that can produce rational conviction and acceptable obedience. A conscience that awaits the decision of the multitude, that hangs in suspense for the casting vote of the majority, is a fit subject for the man of sin. This, we are persuaded, is the uniform sentiment of real Christians of every denomination. Would to God that all professors were such, then should our eyes soon behold the prosperity of Zion; we should soon see Jerusalem a quiet habitation. Union in truth has been, and ever must be, the desire and prayer of all such; "Union in

Truth" is our motto. The divine word is our standard; in the Lord's name do we display our banners. Our eyes are upon the promises, "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun." "When the enemy shall come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Our humble desire is to be His standard-bearers, to fight under *His* banner, and with *His* weapons, "which are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;" even all these strongholds of division, those partition walls of separation, which, like the walls of Jericho, have been built up, as it were, to the very heavens, to separate God's people, to divide *His* flock and so to prevent them from entering into their promised rest, at least in so far as it respects this world. An enemy hath done this, but he shall not finally prevail; "for the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." "And the kingdom and dominion, even the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, and they shall possess it forever." But this cannot be in their present broken and divided state; "for a kingdom or a house divided against itself cannot stand; but cometh to desolation." Now this has been the case with the Church for a long time. However, "the Lord will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His heritage; but judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it." To all such, and such alone, are our expectations directed. Come, then, ye blessed of the Lord, we have your prayers, let us also have your actual assistance. What, shall we pray for a thing and not strive to obtain it!

We call, we invite you again, by every consideration in these premises. You that are near, associate with us; you that are at too great a distance, associate as we have done. Let not the paucity of your number in any given district, prove an insuperable discouragement. Remember Him that has said, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father who is in heaven: for where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." With such a promise as this, for the attainment of every possible and promised good, there is no room for discouragement. Come, then, "ye that fear the Lord; keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He make Jerusalem a joy and a praise in the earth." Put on that

noble resolution dictated by the prophet, saying, "For Zion's sake will we not hold our peace, and for Jerusalem's sake we will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Thus impressed, you will find means to associate at such convenient distances, as to meet at least once a month; to beseech the Lord to put an end to our lamentable divisions; to heal and unite His people, that His Church may resume her original constitutional unity and purity, and thus be exalted to the enjoyment of her promised prosperity, that the Jews may be speedily converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles brought in. Thus associated, you will be in a capacity to investigate the evil causes of our sad divisions; to consider and bewail their pernicious effects; and to mourn over them before the Lord—who hath said: "I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offense and seek My face." Alas! then, what reasonable prospect can we have of being delivered from those sad calamities, which have so long afflicted the Church of God; while a party spirit, instead of bewailing, is everywhere justifying, the bitter principle of these pernicious evils; by insisting upon the right of rejecting those, however unexceptionable in other respects, who cannot see with them in matters of private opinion, of human inference, that are nowhere expressly revealed or enjoined in the word of God. Thus associated, will the friends of peace, the advocates for Christian unity, be in a capacity to connect in larger circles, where several of those smaller societies may meet semi-annually at a convenient centre; and thus avail themselves of their combined exertions for promoting the interests of the common cause. We hope that many of the Lord's ministers in all places will volunteer in this service, forasmuch as they know it is His favourite work, the very desire of His soul.

You lovers of Jesus, and beloved of Him, however scattered in this cloudy and dark day, you love the truth as it is in Jesus; (if our hearts deceive us not) so do we. You desire union in Christ with all them that love Him; so do we. You lament and bewail our sad divisions; so do we. You reject the doctrines and commandments of men, that you may keep the law of Christ; so do we. You believe that the word itself ought to be our rule, and not any human explication of it; so do we. You believe that no man has a right to judge, to exclude, or reject his professing Christian brother, except in so far as he stands condemned or rejected by the express letter of the law; so do we.

You believe that the great fundamental law of unity and love ought not to be violated to make way for exalting human opinions to an equality with express revelation, by making them articles of faith and terms of communion; so do we. You sincere and impartial followers of Jesus, friends of truth and peace, we dare not, we cannot think otherwise of you; it would be doing violence to your character; it would be inconsistent with your prayers and profession so to do. We shall, therefore, have *your* hearty concurrence. But if any of our dear brethren, from whom we should expect better things, should, through weakness or prejudice, be in anything otherwise minded than we have ventured to suppose, we charitably hope that, in due time, God will reveal even this unto them; only let such neither refuse to come to the light, nor yet, through prejudice, reject it when it shines upon them. Let them rather seriously consider what we have thus most seriously and respectfully submitted to their consideration; weigh every sentiment in the balance of the sanctuary, as in the sight of God, with earnest prayer for, and humble reliance upon, His Spirit, and not in the spirit of self-sufficiency and party zeal; and, in so doing, we rest assured, the consequence will be happy, both for their own and the Church's peace. Let none imagine, that in so saying, we arrogate to ourselves a degree of intelligence superior to our brethren; much less superior to mistake. So far from this, our confidence is entirely founded upon the express Scripture and matter-of-fact evidence of the things referred to; which may, nevertheless, through inattention or prejudice, fail to produce their proper effect, as has been the case with respect to some of the most evident truths in a thousand instances. But charity thinketh no evil; and we are far from surmising, though we must speak. To warn, even against possible evils, is certainly no breach of charity, as to be confident of the certainty of some things is no just argument of presumption. We by no means claim the approbation of our brethren as to anything we have suggested for promoting the sacred cause of Christian unity, further than it carries its own evidence along with it; but we humbly claim a fair investigation of the subject, and solicit the assistance of our brethren for carrying into effect what we have thus weakly attempted. It is our consolation, in the meantime, that the desired event, as certain as it will be happy and glorious, admits of no dispute, however we may hesitate or differ about the proper means of promoting it. All we

shall venture to say as to this is, that we trust we have taken the proper ground; at least, if we have not, we despair of finding it elsewhere. For, if holding fast in profession and practice whatever is expressly revealed and enjoined in the divine standard does not, under the promised influence of the divine Spirit, prove an adequate basis for promoting and maintaining unity, peace, and purity, we utterly despair of attaining those invaluable privileges, by adopting the standard of any party. To advocate the cause of unity, while espousing the interests of a party, would appear as absurd as for this country to take part with either of the belligerents in the present awful struggle, which has convulsed and is convulsing, the nations, in order to maintain her neutrality and secure her peace. Nay, it would be adopting the very means by which the bewildered Church has, for hundreds of years past, been rending and dividing herself into factions, for Christ's sake, and for the truth's sake; though the first and foundation truth of our Christianity is union with Him, and the very next to it in order, union with each other in Him—"that we receive each other, as Christ has also received us, to the glory of God." "For this is His commandment: That we believe in His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him; and hereby we know that He dwelleth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us," even the spirit of faith, and of love, and of a sound mind. And surely this should suffice us. But how to love and receive our brother, as we believe and hope Christ has received both him and us, and yet refuse to hold communion with him, is, we confess, a mystery too deep for us. If this be the way that Christ hath received us, then woe is unto us. We do not here intend a professed brother transgressing the expressed letter of the law, and refusing to be reclaimed. Whatever may be our charity in such a case, we have not sufficient evidence that Christ has received him, or that he has received Christ as his teacher and Lord. To adopt means, then, apparently subversive of the very end proposed, means which the experience of ages has evinced successful only in overthrowing the visible interests of Christianity, in counteracting, as far as possible, the declared intention, the expressed command of its divine Author, would appear in no wise a prudent measure for removing and preventing those evils. To maintain unity and purity has always been the plausible pretense of the compilers and abettors

of human systems, and we believe, in many instances, their sincere intention; but have they at all answered the end? Confessedly, demonstrably, they have not; no, not even in the several parties which have most strictly adopted them; much less to the catholic professing body. Instead of her catholic constitutional unity and purity, what does the Church present us with, at this day, but a catalogue of sects and sectarian systems—each binding its respective party, by the most sacred and solemn engagements, to continue as it is to the end of the world; at least, this is confessedly the case with many of them. What a sorry substitute these for Christian unity and love! On the other hand, what a mercy is it that no human obligation that man can come under is valid against the truth. When the Lord the Healer descends upon His people, to give them a discovery of the nature and tendency of those artificial bonds wherewith they have suffered themselves to be bound in their dark and sleepy condition, they will no more be able to hold them in a state of sectarian bondage than the withes and cords with which the Philistines bound Samson were able to retain him their prisoner, or than the bonds of antichrist were to hold in captivity the fathers of the Reformation. May the Lord soon open the eyes of His people to see things in their true light, and excite them to come up out of their wilderness condition, out of this Babel of confusion, leaning upon their Beloved, and embracing each other in Him, holding fast the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This gracious unity and unanimity in Jesus would afford the best external evidence of their union with Him, and of their conjoint interest in the Father's love. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," says He, "if ye have love one to another." And "This is My commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you; that ye also love one another." And again, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are;" even "all that shall believe in Me; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." May the Lord hasten it in His time. Farewell.

Peace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

THOMAS CAMPBELL,
THOMAS ACHESON.

Washington, Pa.,
September 7, 1809.

Appendix

To prevent mistakes, we beg leave to subjoin the following explanations. As to what we have done, our reasons for so doing, and the grand object we would desire to see accomplished, all these, we presume, are sufficiently declared in the foregoing pages. As to what we intend to do in our associate capacity, and the ground we have taken in that capacity, though expressly and definitely declared, yet these, perhaps, might be liable to some misconstruction. First, then, we beg leave to assure our brethren that we have no intention to interfere, either directly or indirectly, with the peace and order of the settled Churches, by directing any ministerial assistance with which the Lord may please to favour us, to make inroads upon such; or by endeavouring to erect Churches out of Churches, to distract and divide congregations. We have no nostrum, no peculiar discovery of our own to propose to fellow-Christians, for the fancied importance of which they should become followers of us. We propose to patronize nothing but the inculcation of the express word of God, either as to matter of faith or practice; but every one that has a Bible, and can read it, can read this for himself. Therefore, we have nothing new. Neither do we pretend to acknowledge persons to be ministers of Christ, and, at the same time, consider it our duty to forbid or discourage people to go to hear them, merely because they may hold some things disagreeable to us; much less to encourage their people to leave them on that account. And such do we esteem all who preach a free, unconditional salvation through the blood of Jesus to perishing sinners of every description, and who manifestly connect with this a life of holiness and pastoral diligence in the performance of all the duties of their sacred office, according to the Scriptures, of even all of whom, as to all appearance, it may be truly said to the objects of their charge: "They seek not *yours*, but *you*."

May the good Lord prosper all such, by whatever name they are called, and hasten that happy period when Zion's watchmen shall see eye to eye, and all be called by the same name. *Such*, then, have nothing to fear from our association, were our resources equal to our utmost wishes. But all others we esteem as hirelings, as idle shepherds, and should be glad to see the Lord's flock delivered from their mouth, according to His promise. Our principal and proper design, then, with respect to ministerial assistants, such as we have described in our fifth resolution, is to direct their attention to those places where there is manifest need for their labours; and many such places there are; would to God it were in our power to supply them. As to creeds and confessions, although we may appear to our brethren to oppose them, yet this is to be understood only in *so far* as they oppose the unity of the Church, by containing sentiments not expressly revealed in the word of God; or, by the way of using them, become the instruments of a human or implicit faith, or oppress the weak of God's heritage. Where they are liable to none of those objections, we have nothing against them. It is the *abuse* and not the *lawful use* of such compilations that we oppose. See Proposition 7. Our intention, therefore, with respect to all the Churches of Christ is perfectly amicable. We heartily wish their reformation, but by no means their hurt or confusion. Should any affect to say that our coming forward as we have done, in advancing and publishing such things, has a manifest tendency to distract and divide the Churches, or to make a new party, we treat it as a confident and groundless assertion, and must suppose they have not duly considered, or, at least, not well understood the subject.

All we shall say to this at present, is, that if the divine word be not the standard of a party, then are we not a party, for we have adopted no other. If to maintain its alone sufficiency be not a party principle, then are we not a party. If to justify this principle by our practice, in making a rule of it, and of *it alone*, and not of our own opinions, nor of those of others, be not a party principle, then are we not a party. If to propose and practice neither more nor less than it expressly reveals and enjoins be not a partial business, then are we not a party. These are the very sentiments we have approved and recommended, as a society formed for the express purpose of promoting Christian unity, in opposition to a party spirit. Should

any tell us that to do these things is impossible without the intervention of human reason and opinion, we humbly thank them for the discovery. But who ever thought otherwise? Were we not rational subjects, and of course capable of understanding and forming opinions, would it not evidently appear that, to us, revelation of any kind would be quite useless, even suppose it as evident as mathematics? We pretend not, therefore, to divest ourselves of reason, that we may become quiet, inoffensive, and peaceable Christians; nor yet, of any of its proper and legitimate operations upon divinely revealed truths. We only pretend to assert, what every one that pretends to reason must acknowledge, namely, that there is a manifest distinction between an express Scripture declaration, and the conclusion or inference which may be deduced from it; and that the former may be clearly understood, even where the latter is but imperfectly if at all perceived; and that we are at least as certain of the declaration as we can be of the conclusion we drew from it; and that, after all, the conclusion ought not to be exalted above the premises, so as to make void the declaration for the sake of establishing our own conclusion; and that, therefore, the express commands to preserve and maintain inviolate Christian unity and love, ought not to be set aside to make way for exalting our inferences above the express authority of God. Our inference, upon the whole, is, that where a professing Christian brother opposes or refuses nothing either in faith or practice, for which there can be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord," that we ought not to reject him because he cannot see with our eyes as to matters of human inference, of private judgment. "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish? Now walkest thou not charitably?" Thus we reason, thus we conclude, to make no conclusion of our own, nor of any other fallible fellow-creature, a rule of faith or duty to our brother. Whether we refuse reason, then, or abuse it, in our so doing, let our brethren judge. But, after all, we have only ventured to suggest what, in other words, the apostle has expressly taught; namely, that the strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves; that we ought to receive him that is weak in the faith, because God has received him. In a word, that we ought to receive one another, as Christ hath also received us to the glory of God. We dare not, therefore, patronize the rejection of God's dear children, because they may not be able to see alike in

matters of human inference—of private opinion; and such we esteem all things not expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God. If otherwise, we know not what private opinion means. On the other hand, should our peaceful and affectionate overture for union in truth prove offensive to any of our brethren, or occasion disturbances in any of the Churches, the blame cannot be attached to us. We have only ventured to persuade, and, if possible, to excite to the performance of an important duty—a duty equally incumbent upon us all. Neither have we pretended to dictate to *them* what *they* should do. We have only proposed what appeared to us most likely to promote the desired event, humbly submitting the whole premises to their candid and impartial investigation, to be altered, corrected, and amended, as they see cause, or to adopt any other plan that may appear more just and unexceptionable. As for ourselves, we have taken all due care, in the meantime, to take no step that might throw a stumbling-block in the way, that might prove now, or at any future period, a barrier to prevent the accomplishment of that most desirable object, either by joining to support a party, or by patronizing anything as articles of faith or duty not expressly enjoined in the divine standard; as we are sure, whatever alterations may take place, *that* will stand. That considerable alterations must and will take place, in the standards of all the sects, before that glorious object can be accomplished, no man, that duly considers the matter, can possibly doubt. In so far, then, we have at least endeavoured to act consistently; and with the same consistency would desire to be instrumental in erecting as many Churches as possible throughout the desolate places of God's heritage, upon the same catholic foundation, being well persuaded that every such erection will not only in the issue prove an accession to the general cause, but will also, in the meantime, be a step towards it, and, of course, will reap the first-fruits of that blissful harvest that will fill the face of the world with fruit. For if the first Christian Churches, walking in the fear of the Lord in holy unity and unanimity, enjoyed the comforts of the Holy Spirit, and were increased and edified, we have reason to believe that walking in their footsteps will everywhere and at all times insure the same blessed privileges. And it is in an exact conformity to their recorded and approved example, that we, through grace, would be desirous to promote the erection of Churches; and this we believe to

be quite practicable, if the legible and authentic records of *their* faith and practice be handed down to *us* upon the page of New Testament Scripture; but if otherwise, we cannot help it. Yet, even in this case, might we not humbly presume that the Lord would take the will for the deed? for if there be first a willing mind, we are told, "it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." It would appear, then, that sincerely and humbly adopting this model, with an entire reliance upon promised grace, we cannot, we shall not, be disappointed. By this, at least, we shall get rid of two great evils, which, we fear, are at this day grievously provoking the Lord to plead a controversy with the Churches: we mean the taking and giving of unjust offenses; judging and rejecting each other in matters wherein the Lord hath not judged, in a flat contradiction to His expressly revealed will. But, according to the principle adopted, we can neither take offense at our brother for his private opinions, if he be content to hold them as such, nor yet offend him with ours, if he do not usurp the place of the lawgiver; and even suppose he should, in this case we judge him, not for his *opinions*, but for his *presumption*. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" But further, to prevent mistakes, we beg leave to explain our meaning in a sentence or two which might possibly be misunderstood. In the opening pages we say, that no man has a right to judge his brother, except in so far as he manifestly violates the express letter of the law. By the law here, and elsewhere, when taken in this latitude, we mean that whole revelation of faith and duty expressly declared in the divine word, taken together, or in its due connection, upon every article, and not any detached sentence. We understand it as extending to all prohibitions, as well as to all requirements. "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." We dare, therefore, neither do nor receive anything as of divine obligation for which there cannot be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord," either in express terms, or by approved precedent. According to this rule we judge, and beyond it we dare not go. Taking this sentiment in connection with the last clause of the fifth resolution, we are to be understood, of all matters of faith and practice, of primary and universal obligation; that is to say, of express revelation; that nothing be inculcated, as such, for which there cannot be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord,"

as above, without, at the same time, interfering directly or indirectly with the private judgment of any individual, which does not expressly contradict the express letter of the law, or add to the number of its institutions. Every sincere and upright Christian will understand and do the will of God, in every instance, to the best of his skill and judgment; but in the application of the general rule to particular cases there may, and doubtless will, be some variety of opinion and practice. This, we see, was actually the case in the apostolic Churches, without any breach of Christian unity; and if this was the case at the erection of the Christian Church from among Jews and Gentiles, may we not reasonably expect that it will be the same at her restoration from under her long antichristian and sectarian desolations?

With a direct reference to this state of things, and, as we humbly think, in a perfect consistency with the foregoing explanations, have we expressed ourselves previously, wherein we declare ourselves ready to relinquish whatever we have hitherto received as matter of faith or practice, not expressly taught and enjoined in the word of God, so that we and our brethren might, by this mutual concession, return together to the original constitutional unity of the Christian Church, and dwell together in peace and charity. By this proposed relinquishment we are to be understood, in the first instance, of our manner of holding those things, and not simply of the things themselves; for no man can relinquish his opinions or practices till once convinced that they are wrong; and this he may not be immediately, even supposing they were so. One thing, however, he may do: when not bound by an express command, he need not impose them upon others, by any wise requiring their approbation; and when this is done, the things, to them, are as good as dead, yea, as good as buried, too, being thus removed out of the way. Has not the apostle set us a noble example of this in his pious and charitable zeal for the comfort and edification of his brother, in declaring himself ready to forego his rights (not indeed to break commandments) rather than stumble, or offend, his brother? And who knows not that the Hebrew Christians abstained from certain meats, observed certain days, kept the passover, circumcised their children, etc., etc., while no such things were practiced by the Gentile converts, and yet no breach of unity while they charitably forbore one with the other. But had the Jews been expressly prohibited, or

the Gentiles expressly enjoined, by the authority of Jesus, to observe these things, could they, in such a case, have lawfully exercised this forbearance? But where no express law is, there can be no formal, no intentional transgression, even although its implicit and necessary consequences had forbid the thing, had they been discovered. Upon the whole, we see one thing is evident: the Lord will bear with the weaknesses, the involuntary ignorances, and mistakes of His people, though not with their presumption. Ought they not, therefore, to bear with each other—"to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; forbearing one with another in love?" What says the Scripture? We say, then, the declaration referred to is to be thus understood in the first instance; though we do not say but something further is intended. For certainly we may lawfully suspend both declaration and practice upon any subject, where the law is silent; when to do otherwise must prevent the accomplishment of an expressly commanded and highly important duty; and such, confessedly, is the thing in question. What says the apostle? "All things are lawful for me; but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me; but all things edify not." It seems, then, that among lawful things which might be forborne—that is, as we humbly conceive, things not expressly commanded—the governing principle of the apostle's conduct was the edification of his brethren of the Church of God. A divine principle this, indeed! May the Lord God infuse it into all His people. Were all those nonpreceptive opinions and practices which have been maintained and exalted to the destruction of the Church's unity, counterbalanced with the breach of the express law of Christ, and the black catalogue of mischiefs which have necessarily ensued, on which side, think you, would be the preponderance? When weighed in the balance with this monstrous complex evil, would they not all appear lighter than vanity? Who, then, would not relinquish a cent to obtain a kingdom! And here let it be noted, that it is not the renunciation of an opinion or practice as sinful that is proposed or intended, but merely a cessation from the publishing or practicing it, so as to give offense; a thing men are in the habit of doing every day for their private comfort or secular emolument, where the advantage is of infinitely less importance. Neither is there here any clashing of duties, as if to forbear was a sin and also to practice was sin; the thing to be forborne being a matter of private opinion, which,

though not expressly forbidden, yet are we by no means expressly commanded to practice; whereas we are expressly commanded to endeavour to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And what says the apostle to the point in hand? "Hast thou faith," says he; "have it to thyself before God. Happy is the man that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth."

It may be further added, that a still higher and more perfect degree of uniformity is intended, though neither in the first nor second instance, which are but so many steps towards it; namely: the utter abolition of those minor differences, which have been greatly increased, as well as continued, by our unhappy manner of treating them, in making them the subject of perpetual strife and contention. Many of the opinions which are now dividing the Church, had they been let alone, would have been long since dead and gone; but the constant insisting upon them, as articles of faith and terms of salvation, have so beaten them into the minds of men, that, in many instances, they would as soon deny the Bible itself as give up one of those opinions. Having thus embraced contentions and preferred divisions to that constitutional unity, peace, and charity so essential to Christianity, it would appear that the Lord, in righteous judgment, has abandoned His professing people to the awful scourge of those evils; as, in an instance somewhat similar, He formerly did His highly favoured Israel. "My people," says He, "would not hearken to My voice. So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels." "Israel hath made many altars to sin: therefore altars shall be unto him to sin." Thus, then, are we to be consistently understood, as fully and fairly intending, on *our* part, what we have declared and proposed to our brethren, as, to *our* apprehension, incumbent upon *them* and *us*, for putting an end forever to our sad and lamentable schisms. Should any object and say that, after all, the fullest compliance with everything proposed and intended would not restore the Church to the desired unity, as there might remain differences of opinion and practice; let such but duly consider what properly belongs to the unity of the Church, and we are persuaded this objection will vanish. Does not the visible Scriptural unity of the Christian Church consist in the unity of her public profession and practice, and, under this, in the manifest charity of her members, one towards another, and not in the unity of private opinion and practice of every individ-

ual? Was not this evidently the case in the apostles' days, as has been already observed? If so, the objection falls to the ground. And here let it be noted (if the hint be at all necessary), that we are speaking of the unity of the Church considered as a great, visible, professing body, consisting of many co-ordinate associations; each of these, in its aggregate or associate capacity, walking by the same rule, professing and practicing the same things. That this visible Scriptural unity be preserved without corruption, or breach of charity, throughout the whole, and in every particular worshipping society or Church, is the grand desideratum—the thing strictly enjoined and greatly to be desired. An agreement in the expressly revealed will of God is the adequate and firm foundation of this unity; ardent prayer, accompanied with prudent, peaceable, and persevering exertion, in the use of all Scriptural means for accomplishing it, are the things humbly suggested and earnestly recommended to our brethren. If we have mistaken the way, their charity will put us right; but if otherwise, their fidelity to Christ and His cause will excite them to come forth speedily, to assist with us in this blessed work.

After all, should any impeach us with the vague charge of Latitudinarianism (let none be startled at this gigantic term), it will prove as feeble an opponent to the glorious cause in which we, however weak and unworthy, are professedly engaged, as the Zamzummins did of old, to prevent the children of Lot from taking possession of their inheritance. If we take no greater latitude than the divine law allows, either in judging of persons or doctrines—either in profession or practice (and this is the very thing we humbly propose and sincerely intend), may we not reasonably hope that such a latitude will appear, to every upright Christian, perfectly innocent and unexceptionable? If this be Latitudinarianism, it must be a good thing, and, therefore, the more we have of it the better; and may be it is, for we are told, "the commandment is exceeding broad;" and we intend to go just as far as it will suffer us, but not one hair-breadth further; so, at least, says our profession. And surely it will be time enough to condemn our practice, when it appears manifestly inconsistent with the profession we have thus precisely and explicitly made. We here refer to the whole of the foregoing premises. But were this word as bad as it is long, were it stuffed with evil from beginning to end, may be it better belongs

to those that brandish it so unmercifully at their neighbours, especially if they take a greater latitude than their neighbours do, or than the divine law allows. Let the case, then, be fairly submitted to all that know their Bible, to all that take upon them to see with their own eyes, to judge for themselves. And here let it be observed once for all, that it is only to such we direct our attention in the foregoing pages. As for those that either cannot or will not see and judge for themselves, they must be content to follow their leaders till they come to their eyesight, or determine to make use of the faculties and means of information which God has given them; with such, in the meantime, it would be useless to reason, seeing that they either confessedly cannot see, or have completely resigned themselves to the conduct of their leaders, and are therefore determined to hearken to none but them. If there be none such, however, we are happily deceived; but, if so, we are not the only persons that are thus deceived; for this is the common fault objected by almost all the parties to each other, namely, that they either cannot or will not see; and it would be hard to think they were all mistaken; the fewer there be, however, of this description, the better. To all those, then, that are disposed to see and think for themselves, to form their judgment by the divine word itself, and not by any human explication of it, humbly relying upon and looking for the promised assistance of divine teaching, and not barely trusting to their own understanding—to all such do we gladly commit our cause, being persuaded that, at least, they will give it a very serious and impartial consideration, as being truly desirous to know the truth. To you, then, we appeal, in the present instance, as we have also done from the beginning. Say, we beseech you, to whom does the charge of Latitudinarianism, when taken in a bad sense (for we have supposed it may be taken in a good sense), most truly and properly belong, whether to those that will neither add nor diminish anything as to matter of faith and duty, either to or from what is expressly revealed and enjoined in the holy Scriptures, or to those who pretend to go further than this, or to set aside some of its express declarations and injunctions, to make way for their own opinions, inferences, and conclusions? Whether to those who profess their willingness to hold communion with their acknowledged Christian brethren, when they neither manifestly oppose nor contradict anything expressly revealed

and enjoined in the sacred standard, or to those who reject such, when professing to believe and practice whatever is expressly revealed and enjoined therein, without, at the same time, being *alleged*, much less *found* guilty, of anything to the contrary, but instead of this asserting and declaring their hearty assent and consent to everything for which there can be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord," either in express terms or by approved precedent? To which of these, think you, does the odious charge of Latitudinarianism belong? Which of them takes the greatest latitude? Whether those that expressly judge and condemn where they have no express warrant for so doing, or those that absolutely refuse so to do? And we can assure our brethren, that such things are and have been done, to our own certain knowledge, and even where we least expected it; and that it is to this discovery, as much as to many other things, that we stand indebted for that thorough conviction of the evil state of things in the Churches, which has given rise to our association. As for our part, we dare no longer give our assent to such proceedings; we dare no longer concur in expressly asserting or declaring anything in the name of the Lord, that He has not expressly declared in His holy word. And until such time as Christians come to see the evil of doing otherwise, we see no rational ground to hope that there can be either unity, peace, purity, or prosperity, in the Church of God. Convinced of the truth of this, we would humbly desire to be instrumental in pointing out to our fellow-Christians the evils of such conduct. And if we might venture to give our opinion of such proceedings, we would not hesitate to say, that they appear to include three great evils—evils truly great in themselves, and at the same time productive of most evil consequences.

First, to determine expressly, in the name of the Lord, when the Lord has not expressly determined, appears to us a very great evil. (See Deut. xviii. 20.) "The prophet that shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, even that prophet shall die." The Apostle Paul, no doubt, well aware of this, cautiously distinguishes between his own judgment and the express injunctions of the Lord. (See 1 Cor. vii. 25 and 40.) Though, at the same time, it appears that he was as well convinced of the truth and propriety of his declarations, and of the concurrence of the Holy Spirit with his judgment, as any of our modern determiners may

be; for "I think," said he, "that I have the Spirit of God;" and we doubt much, if the best of them could honestly say more than this; yet we see that, with all this, he would not bind the Church with his conclusions; and, for this very reason, as he expressly tells us, because, as to the matter on hand, he had no commandment of the Lord. He spoke by permission, and not by commandment, as one that had obtained mercy to be faithful, and therefore would not forge his Master's name by affixing it to his own conclusions, saying, "The Lord saith," when the Lord had not spoken.

A second evil is, not only judging our brother to be absolutely wrong, because he differs from our opinions, but more especially, our judging him to be a transgressor of the law in so doing, and, of course, treating him as such by censuring or otherwise exposing him to contempt, or, at least, preferring ourselves before him in our own judgment, saying, as it were, Stand by, I am holier than thou.

A third and still more dreadful evil is, when we not only, in this kind of way, judge and set at nought our brother, but, moreover, proceed as a Church, acting and judging in the name of Christ, not only to determine that our brother is wrong because he differs from our determinations, but also, in connection with this, proceed so far as to determine the merits of the cause by rejecting him, or casting him out of the Church, as unworthy of a place in her communion, and thus, as far as in our power, cutting him off from the kingdom of heaven. In proceeding thus, we not only declare, that, in our judgment, our brother is in an error, which we may sometimes do in a perfect consistence with charity, but we also take upon us to judge, as acting in the name and by the authority of Christ, that his error cuts him off from salvation; that continuing such, he has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. If not, what means our refusing him—our casting him out of the Church, which is the kingdom of God in this world? For certainly, if a person have no right, according to the divine word, to a place in the Church of God upon earth (which we say he has not, by thus rejecting Him), he can have none to a place in the Church in heaven—unless we should suppose that those whom Christ by His word rejects here, He will nevertheless receive hereafter. And surely it is by the word that every Church pretends to judge; and it is by this rule, in the case before us, that the person in the judgment of the Church stands rejected. Now is not this, to all intents and purposes, determining the merits of the

cause? Do we not conclude that the person's error cuts him off from all ordinary possibility of salvation, by thus cutting him off from a place in the Church, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation? Does he not henceforth become to us as a heathen man and a publican? Is he not reckoned among the number of those that are without, whom God judgeth? If not, what means such a solemn determination? Is it anything or is it nothing, for a person to stand rejected by the Church of God? If such rejection confessedly leave the man still in the same safe and hopeful state as to his spiritual interests, then, indeed, it becomes a matter of mere indifference; for as to his civil and natural privileges, it interferes not with them. But the Scripture gives us a very different view of the matter; for there we see that those that stand justly rejected by the Church on earth, have no room to hope for a place in the Church of heaven. "What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" is the awful sanction of the Church's judgment, in justly rejecting any person. Take away this, and it has no sanction at all. But the Church rejecting, always pretends to have acted justly in so doing, and, if so, whereabouts does it confessedly leave the person rejected, if not in a state of damnation? that is to say, if it acknowledge itself to be a Church of Christ, and to have acted justly. If, after all, any particular Church acting thus should refuse the foregoing conclusion, by saying: We meant no such thing concerning the person rejected; we only judged him unworthy of a place among *us*, and therefore put him away, but there are other Churches that may receive him; we would be almost tempted to ask such a Church, if those other Churches be Churches of Christ, and if so, pray what does it account itself? Is it anything more or better than a Church of Christ? And whether, if those other Churches do their duty as faithful Churches, any of them would receive the person it had rejected? If it be answered that, in acting faithfully, none of those other Churches either could or would receive him, then, confessedly, in the judgment of this particular Church, the person ought to be universally rejected; but if otherwise, it condemns itself of having acted unfaithfully, nay cruelly, towards a Christian brother, a child of God, in thus rejecting him from the heritage of the Lord, in thus cutting him off from his Father's house, as the unnatural brethren did the beloved Joseph. But even suppose some one or other of those unfaithful Churches should receive the outcast, would their unfaithfulness in so doing

nullify, in the judgment of this more faithful Church, its just and faithful decision in rejecting him? If not, then, confessedly, in its judgment, the person still remains under the influence of its righteous sentence, debarred from the kingdom of heaven; that is to say, if it believe the Scriptures, that what it has righteously done upon earth is ratified in heaven. We see no way that a Church acting *thus* can possibly get rid of this *awful conclusion*, except it acknowledges that the person it has rejected from its communion still has a right to the communion of the Church; but if it acknowledge *this*, whereabout does it leave itself, in thus shutting out a fellow-Christian, an acknowledged brother, a child of God? Do we find any parallel for such conduct in the inspired records, except in the case of Diotrephes, of whom the apostle says, "Who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church."

But further, suppose another Church should receive this castaway, this person which this faithful Church supposed itself to have righteously rejected, would not the Church so doing incur the displeasure, nay even the *censure* of the Church that had rejected him? and, we should think, justly too if he deserved to be rejected. And would not this naturally produce a schism between the Churches? Or, if it be supposed that a schism did already exist, would not this manifestly tend to perpetuate and increase it? If one Church, receiving those whom another puts away, will not be productive of schism, we must confess we cannot tell what would. That Church, therefore, must surely act very schismatically, very unlike a Church of Christ, which necessarily presupposes or produces schism in order to shield an oppressed fellow-Christian from the dreadful consequences of its unrighteous proceedings. And is not this confessedly the case with every Church which rejects a person from its communion while it acknowledges him to be a fellow-Christian; and, in order to excuse this piece of cruelty, says he may find refuge some place else, some other Church may receive him? For, as we have already observed, if no schism did already exist, one Church receiving those whom another has rejected must certainly make one. The same evils also will as justly attach to the conduct of an individual who refuses or breaks communion with a Church because it will not receive or

make room for his private opinions or self-devised practices in its public profession and managements; for does he not, in this case, actually take upon him to judge the Church which he thus rejects as unworthy of the communion of Christians? And is not this, to all intents and purposes, declaring it, in his judgment, excommunicate, or at least worthy of excommunication?

Thus have we briefly endeavoured to show our brethren what evidently appears to us to be the heinous nature and dreadful consequences of that truly latitudinarian principle and practice which is the bitter root of almost all our divisions, namely, the imposing of our private opinions upon each other as articles of faith or duty, introducing them into the public profession and practice of the Church, and acting upon them as if they were the express law of Christ, by judging and rejecting our brethren that differ from us in those things, or at least by *so* retaining them in our public profession and practice that our brethren cannot join with us, or we with them, without becoming actually partakers in those things which they or we cannot in conscience approve, and which the word of God nowhere expressly enjoins upon us. To cease from all such things, by simply returning to the original standard of Christianity, the profession and practice of the primitive Church, as expressly exhibited upon the sacred page of New Testament Scripture, is the only possible way that we can perceive to get rid of those evils. And we humbly think that a uniform agreement in *that* for the preservation of charity would be infinitely preferable to our contentions and divisions; nay, that such a uniformity is the very thing that the Lord requires if the New Testament be a perfect model, a sufficient formula for the worship, discipline, and government of the Christian Church. Let *us* do as we are there expressly told *they* did, say as *they* said; that is, profess and practice as therein expressly enjoined by precept and precedent, in every possible instance, after *their* approved example; and in so doing we shall realize and exhibit all that unity and uniformity that the primitive Church possessed, or that the law of Christ requires. But if, after all, our brethren can point out a better way to regain and preserve that Christian unity and charity expressly enjoined upon the Church of God, we shall thank them for the discovery, and cheerfully embrace it.

Should it still be urged that this would open a wide door to Latitudinarianism, seeing all that profess Christianity profess to receive

the holy Scriptures, and yet differ so widely in their religious sentiments, we say, let them profess what they will, their difference in religious profession and practice originates in their departure from what is expressly revealed and enjoined, and not in their strict and faithful conformity to it, which is the thing we humbly advise for putting an end to those differences. But you may say, Do they not already all agree in the letter, though differing so far in sentiment? However this may be, have they all agreed to make the letter their rule, or, rather, to make it the subject-matter of their profession and practice? Surely not, or else they would all profess and practice the same thing. Is it not as evident as the shining light that the Scriptures exhibit but one and the self-same subject-matter of profession and practice, at all times and in all places, and that, therefore, to say as it declares, and to do as it prescribes in all its holy precepts, its approved and imitable examples, would unite the Christian Church in a holy sameness of profession and practice throughout the whole world? By the Christian Church throughout the world, we mean the aggregate of such professors as we have described in Propositions 1 and 8, even all that mutually acknowledge each other as Christians, upon the manifest evidence of their faith, holiness, and charity. It is such only we intend when we urge the necessity of Christian unity. Had only such been all along recognized as the genuine subjects of our holy religion, there would not, in all probability, have been so much apparent need for human formulæ to preserve an external formality of professional unity and soundness in the faith, but artificial and superficial characters need artificial means to train and unite them. A manifest attachment to our Lord Jesus Christ in faith, holiness, and charity, was the original criterion of Christian character, the distinguishing badge of our holy profession, the foundation and cement of Christian unity. But now, alas! and long since, an external name, a mere educational formality of sameness in the profession of a certain standard or formula of human fabric, with a very moderate degree of what is called morality, forms the bond and foundation, the root and reason of ecclesiastical unity. Take away from such the technicalness of their profession, the shibboleth of party, and what have they more? What have they left to distinguish and hold them together? As for the Bible, they are but little beholden to it, they have learned little from it, they know little about it, and therefore depend as little upon it. Nay, they

will even tell you it would be of no use to them without their formula; they could not know a Papist from a Protestant by *it*; that merely by *it* they could neither keep themselves nor the Church right for a single week. You might preach to them what you please, they could not distinguish truth from error. Poor people, it is no wonder they are so fond of their formula! Therefore, they that exercise authority upon them and tell them what they are to believe and what they are to do, are called benefactors. These are the reverend and right reverend authors, upon whom they *can* and *do* place a more entire and implicit confidence than upon the holy apostles and prophets; those plain, honest, unassuming men, who would never venture to say or do anything in the name of the Lord without an express revelation from heaven, and therefore were never distinguished by the venerable titles of Rabbi or Reverend, but just simple Paul, John, Thomas, etc. *These* were but servants. They did not assume to legislate, and, therefore, neither assumed nor received any honorary titles among men, but merely such as were descriptive of their office. And how, we beseech you, shall this gross and prevalent corruption be purged out of the visible professing Church but by a radical reform, but by returning to the original simplicity, the primitive purity of the Christian institution, and, of course, taking up things just as we find them upon the sacred page. And who is there that knows anything of the present state of the Church who does not perceive that it is greatly overrun with the aforesaid evils? Or who that reads his Bible, and receives the impressions it must necessarily produce upon the receptive mind by the statements it exhibits, does not perceive that such a state of things is as distinct from genuine Christianity as oil is from water?

On the other hand, is it not equally as evident that not one of all the erroneous tenets and corrupt practices which have so defamed and corrupted the public profession and practice of Christianity, could ever have appeared in the world had men kept close by the express letter of the divine law, had they thus held fast that form of sound words contained in the holy Scriptures, and considered it their duty so to do, unless they blame those errors and corruptions upon the very form and expression of the Scriptures, and say that, taken in their letter and connection, they immediately, and at first sight, as it were, exhibit the picture they have drawn. Should any be so bold as to assert this, let them produce their performance, the original is

at hand; and let them show us line for line, expression for expression, precept and precedent for practice, without the torture of criticism, inference, or conjecture, and then we shall honestly blame the whole upon the Bible, and thank those that will give us an expurged edition of it, call it constitution, or formula, or what you please, that will not be liable to lead the simple, unlettered world into those gross mistakes, those contentions, schisms, excommunications, and persecutions which have proved so detrimental and scandalous to our holy religion.

Should it be further objected, that even this strict literal uniformity would neither infer nor secure unity of sentiment; it is granted that, in a certain degree, it would not; nor, indeed, is there anything either in Scripture or the nature of things that should induce us to expect an entire unity of sentiment in the present imperfect state. The Church may, and we believe will, come to such a Scriptural unity of faith and practice, that there will be no schism in the body, no self-preferring sect of professed and acknowledged Christians rejecting and excluding their brethren. *This* cannot be, however, till the offensive and excluding causes be removed; and every one knows what *these* are. But that all the members should have the same identical views of all divinely revealed truths, or that there should be no difference of opinion among them, appears to us morally impossible, all things considered. Nor can we conceive what desirable purpose such a unity of sentiment would serve, except to render useless some of those gracious, self-denying, and compassionate precepts of mutual sympathy and forbearance which the word of God enjoins upon His people. Such, then, is the imperfection of our present state. Would to God it might prove, as it ought, a just and humbling counterbalance to our pride! Then, indeed, we would judge one another no more about such matters. We would rather be conscientiously cautious to give no offense; to put no stumbling-block or occasion to fall in our brother's way. We would then no longer exalt our own opinions and inferences to an equality with express revelation, by condemning and rejecting our brother for differing with us in those things.

But although it be granted that the uniformity we plead for would not secure unity of sentiment, yet we should suppose that it would be as efficacious for that purpose as any human expedient or substitute whatsoever. And here we would ask: Have all or any

of those human compilations been able to prevent divisions, to heal breaches, or to produce and maintain unity of sentiment even among those who have most firmly and solemnly embraced them? We appeal for this to the history of all the Churches, and to the present divided state of the Church at large. What good, then, have those divisive expedients accomplished, either to the parties that have adopted them, or to the Church universal, which might not have been as well secured by holding fast in profession and practice that form of sound words contained in the divine standard, without, at the same time, being liable to any of those dangerous and destructive consequences which have necessarily ensued upon the present mode? Or, will any venture to say that the Scriptures, thus kept in their proper place, would not have been amply sufficient, under the promised influence of the divine Spirit, to have produced all that unity of sentiment which is necessary to a life of faith and holiness; and also to have preserved the faith and worship of the Church as pure from mixture and error as the Lord intended, or as the present imperfect state of His people can possibly admit? We should tremble to think that any Christian should say that they would not. And if to use them thus would be sufficient for those purposes, why resort to other expedients; to expedients which, from the beginning to this day, have proved utterly insufficient; nay, to expedients which have always produced the very contrary effects, as experience testifies. Let none here imagine that we set any certain limits to the divine intention, or to the greatness of His power when we thus speak, as if a certain degree of purity from mixture and error were not designed for the Church in this world, or attainable by His people upon earth except in so far as respects the attainment of an angelic or unerring perfection, much less that we mean to suggest that a very moderate degree of unity and purity should content us. We only take it for granted that such a state of perfection is neither intended nor attainable in this world, as will free the Church from all those weaknesses, mistakes, and mismanagements from which she will be completely exempted in heaven, however sound and upright she may now be in her profession, intention, and practice. Neither let any imagine that we here or elsewhere suppose or intend to assert that human standards are intentionally set up in competition with the Bible, much less in opposition to it. We fairly understand and consider them as human expedients, or as

certain doctrinal declarations of the sense in which the compilers understood the Scriptures, designed and embraced for the purpose of promoting and securing that desirable unity and purity which the Bible alone, without those helps, would be insufficient to maintain and secure. If this be not the sense of those that receive and hold them, for the aforesaid purpose, we should be glad to know what it is. It is, however, in this very sense that we take them up when we complain of them, as not only unsuccessful, but also as unhappy expedients, producing the very contrary effects. And even suppose it were doubtful whether or not those helps have produced divisions, one thing, at least, is certain, they have not been able to prevent them; and now, that divisions do exist, it is as certain that they have no fitness nor tendency to heal them, but the very contrary, as fact and experience clearly demonstrate. What shall we do, then, to heal our divisions? We must certainly take some other way than the present practice, if they ever be healed; for it expressly says, they must and shall be perpetuated forever. Let all the enemies of Christianity say Amen; but let all Christians continually say: Forbid it, O Lord. May the good Lord subdue the corruptions and heal the divisions of His people. Amen, and amen.

After all that has been said, some of our timid brethren may, possibly, still object, and say: We fear that without the intervention of some definite creed or formula, you will justly incur the censure of Latitudinarianism; for how otherwise detect and exclude Arians, Socinians, etc.? To such we would reply, that if to profess, inculcate, and practice neither more nor less, neither anything else nor otherwise than the divine word expressly declares respecting the entire subject of faith and duty, and simply to rest in *that*, as the expression of our faith and rule of our practice, will not amount to the profession and practical exhibition of Arianism, Socinianism, etc., but merely to one and the self-same thing, whatever it may be called, then is the *ground* that we have taken, the *principle* that we advocate, in nowise chargeable with Latitudinarianism. Should it be still further objected that all these sects, and many more, profess to receive the Bible, to believe it to be the word of God, and, therefore, will readily profess to believe and practice whatever is revealed and enjoined therein, and yet each will understand it his own way, and of course practice accordingly; nevertheless, according to the plan proposed, you receive them all. We would ask,

then, do all these profess and practice neither more nor less than what we read in the Bible—than what is expressly revealed and enjoined therein? If so, they all profess and practice the same thing, for the Bible exhibits but one and the self-same thing to all. Or, is it their own inferences and opinions that they, in reality, profess and practice? If so, then upon the ground that we have taken they stand rejected, as condemned of themselves, for thus professing one thing when in fact and reality they manifestly practice another. But perhaps you will say, that although a uniformity in profession, and it may be in practice too, might thus be produced, yet still it would amount to no more than a mere uniformity in words, and in the external formalities of practice, while the persons thus professing and practicing might each entertain his own sentiments, how different soever these might be. Our reply is, if so, they could hurt nobody but themselves. Besides, if persons thus united professed and practiced all the same things, pray who could tell that they entertained different sentiments, or even in justice suppose it, unless they gave some evident intimation of it? which, if they did, would justly expose them to censure, or to rejection, if they repented not; seeing the offense, in this case, must amount to nothing less than an express violation of the expressly revealed will of God—to a manifest transgression of the express letter of the law; for we have declared, that except in such a case, no man, in our judgment, has a right to judge, that is, to condemn or reject his professing brother. Here, we presume, there is no greater latitude assumed or allowed on either side than the law expressly determines. But we would humbly ask, if a professed agreement in the terms of any standard be not liable to the very same objection? If, for instance, Arians, Socinians, Arminians, Calvinists, Antinomians, etc., might not all subscribe the Westminster Confession, the Athanasian Creed, or the doctrinal articles of the Church of England. If this be denied, we appeal to historical facts; and, in the meantime, venture to assert, that such things are and have been done. Or, will any say, that a person might not with equal ease, honesty, and consistency, be an Arian or a Socinian in his heart while subscribing the Westminster Confession or the Athanasian Creed, as while making his unqualified profession to believe everything that the Scriptures declare concerning Christ? to put all that confidence in Him, and to ascribe all that glory, honour, thanksgiving, and praise to Him, professed and

ascribed to Him in the divine word? If you say not, it follows, of undeniable consequence, that the wisdom of men, in those compilations, has effected what the divine Wisdom either could not, would not, or did not do, in that all-perfect and glorious revelation of His will, contained in the holy Scriptures. Happy emendation! Blessed expedient! Happy, indeed, for the Church that Athanasius arose in the fourth century to perfect what the holy apostles and prophets had left in such a rude and unfinished state. But if, after all, the divine Wisdom did not think proper to do anything more, or anything else than is already done in the sacred oracles, to settle and determine those important points, who can say that He determined such a thing should be done afterwards? Or has He anywhere given us any intimation of such an intention?

Let it here be carefully observed that the question before us is about human standards designed to be subscribed, or otherwise solemnly acknowledged, for the preservation of ecclesiastical unity and purity, and therefore, of course, by no means applies to the many excellent performances, for the Scriptural elucidation and defense of divinely revealed truths and other instructive purposes. These, we hope, according to their respective merit, we as highly esteem, and as thankfully receive, as our brethren. But further, with respect to unity of sentiment, even suppose it ever so desirable, it appears highly questionable whether such a thing can at all be secured, by any expedient whatsoever, especially if we consider that it necessarily presupposes in so far a unity or sameness of understanding. Or, will any say, that from the youth of seventeen to the man of fourscore—from the illiterate peasant, up to the learned prelate—all the legitimate members of the Church entertain the same sentiments under their respective formulæ? If not, it is still but a mere verbal agreement, a mere show of unity. They say an amen to the same forms of speech, or of sound words, as they are called, without having, at the same time, the same views of the subject; or, it may be, without any determinate views of it at all. And, what is still worse, this profession is palmed upon the world, as well as upon the too credulous professors themselves, for unity of sentiment, for soundness in the faith; when in a thousand instances, they have, properly speaking, no faith at all; that is to say, if faith necessarily presupposes a true and satisfactory conviction of the Scriptural evidence and certainty of the truth of the propositions we profess to believe. A

cheap and easy orthodoxy this, to which we may attain by committing to memory a catechism, or professing our approbation of a formula, made ready to our hand, which we may or may not have once read over; or even if we have, yet may not have been able to read it so correctly and intelligently as to clearly understand one single paragraph from beginning to end, much less to compare it with, to search and try it by the holy Scriptures, to see if these things be so. A cheap and easy orthodoxy this, indeed, to which a person may thus attain, without so much as turning over a single leaf of his Bible, whereas Christ knew no other way of leading us to the knowledge of Himself, at least has prescribed no other, but by searching the Scriptures, with reliance upon His Holy Spirit. A person may, however, by this short and easy method, become as orthodox as the Apostle Paul (if such superficial professions, such mere hearsay verbal repetitions can be called orthodoxy) without ever once consulting the Bible, or so much as putting up a single petition for the Holy Spirit to guide him into all truth, to open his understanding to know the Scriptures; for, his form of sound words truly believed, if it happened to be right, must, without more ado, infallibly secure his orthodoxy. Thrice happy expedient! But is there no Latitudinarianism in all this? Is not this taking a latitude, in devising ways and means for accomplishing divine and saving purposes, which the divine law has nowhere prescribed, for which the Scriptures nowhere afford us either precept or precedent? Unless it can be shown that making human standards to determine the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church for the purpose of preserving her unity and purity, and requiring an approbation of them as a term of communion is a Scripture institution. Far be it from us, in the meantime, to allege that the Church should not make every Scriptural exertion in her power to preserve her unity and purity; to teach and train up her members in the knowledge of all divinely revealed truth; or to say that the evils above complained of attached to all that are in the habit of using the aforesaid helps; or that this wretched state of things, however general, necessarily proceeds from the legitimate use of such; but rather and entirely from the abuse of them, which is the very and only thing that we are all along opposing when we allude to those subordinate standards. (An appellation this, by the by, which appears to us highly paradoxical, if not utterly inconsistent, and full of confusion.)

But, however this may be, we are by no means to be understood as at all wishing to deprive our fellow-Christians of any necessary and possible assistance to understand the Scriptures, or to come to a distinct and particular knowledge of every truth they contain, for which purpose the Westminster Confession and catechisms may, with many other excellent performances, prove eminently useful. But, having served ourselves of these, let our profiting appear to all, by our manifest acquaintance with the Bible; by making our profession of faith and obedience; by declaring its divine dictates, in which we acquiesce, as the subject-matter and rule of both; in our ability to take the Scripture in its connection upon these subjects, so as to understand one part of it by the assistance of another; and in manifesting our self-knowledge, our knowledge of the way of salvation and of the mystery of the Christian life, in the express light of divine revelation, by a direct and immediate reference to, and correct repetition of what it declares upon those subjects. We take it for granted that no man either knows God, or himself, or the way of salvation, but in so far as he has heard and understood His voice upon those subjects, as addressed to him in the Scriptures, and that, therefore, whatever he has heard and learned of a saving nature, is contained in the express terms of the Bible. If so, in the express terms, in and by which "he hath heard and learned of the Father," let him declare it. This by no means forbids him to use helps, but, we humbly presume, will effectually prevent him from resting either in them or upon them, which is the evil so justly complained of; from taking up with the directory instead of the object to which it directs. Thus will the whole subject of his faith and duty, in so far as he has attained, be expressly declared in a "Thus saith the Lord." And is it not worthy of remark, that of whatever use other books may be, to direct and lead us to the Bible, or to prepare and assist us to understand it, yet the Bible never directs us to any book but itself. When we come forward, then, as Christians, to be received by the Church, which, properly speaking, has but one book, "For to it were committed the oracles of God," let us hear of none else. Is it not upon the credible profession of our faith in, and obedience to its divine contents, that the Church is bound to receive applicants for admission? And does not a profession of our faith and obedience necessarily presuppose a knowledge of the dictates we profess to believe and obey? Surely, then, we can declare them, and as surely,

if our faith and obedience be divine, as to the subject-matter, rule, and reason of them, it must be a "Thus saith the Lord"; if otherwise, they are merely human, being taught by the precepts of men. In the case then before us, that is, examination for Church-membership, let the question no longer be, What does any human system say of the primitive or present state of man? of the person, offices, and relations of Christ, etc., etc.? or of this, that, or the other duty? but, What says the Bible? Were this mode of procedure adopted, how much better acquainted with their Bibles would Christians be? What an important alteration would it also make in the education of youth? Would it not lay all candidates for admission into the Church under the happy necessity of becoming particularly acquainted with the holy Scriptures? whereas, according to the present practice, thousands know little about them.

One thing still remains that may appear matter of difficulty or objection to some, namely, that such a close adherence to the express letter of the divine word, as we seem to propose, for the restoration and maintenance of Christian unity, would not only interfere with the free communication of our sentiments one to another upon religious subjects, but must, of course, also necessarily interfere with the public preaching and expounding of the Scriptures for the edification of the Church. Such as feel disposed to make this objection, should justly consider that one of a similar nature, and quite as plausible, might be made to the adoption of human standards, especially when made as some of them confessedly are, "the standard for all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government." In such a case it might, with as much justice, at least, be objected to the adopters: You have now no more use for the Bible; you have got another book, which you have adopted as a standard for all religious purposes; you have no further use for explaining the Scriptures, either as to matter of faith or duty, for this you have confessedly done already in your standard, wherein you have determined all matters of this nature. You also profess to hold fast the form of sound words, which you have thus adopted, and therefore you must never open your mouth upon any subject in any other terms than those of your standard. In the meantime, would any of the parties which has thus adopted its respective standard, consider any of these charges just? If not, let them do as they would be done by. We must confess, however, that for our part, we cannot see how, with any shadow of consistency, some

of them could clear themselves, especially of the first; that is to say, if words have any determinate meaning; for certainly it would appear almost, if not altogether incontrovertible, that a book adopted by any party as its standard for all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, must be considered as the Bible of that party. And after all that can be said in favour of such a performance, be it called Bible, standard, or what it may, it is neither anything more nor better than the judgment or opinion of the party composing or adopting it, and, therefore, wants the sanction of a divine authority, except in the opinion of the party which has thus adopted it. But can the opinion of any party, be it ever so respectable, give the stamp of a divine authority to its judgments? If not, then every human standard is deficient in this leading, all-important, and indispensable property of a rule or standard for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church of God. But, without insisting further upon the intrinsic and irremediable deficiency of human standards for the above purpose (which is undeniably evident if it be granted that a divine authority is indispensably necessary to constitute a standard or rule for divine things, such as is the constitution and managements, the faith, and worship of the Christian Church), we would humbly ask, Would any of the parties consider as just the foregoing objections, however conclusive and well founded all or any of them may appear? We believe they would not. And may we not with equal consistency hold fast the expressly revealed will of God, in the very terms in which it is expressed in His holy word, as the very expression of our faith and express rule of our duty, and yet take the same liberty that they do, notwithstanding their professed and steadfast adherence to their respective standards? We find they do not cease to expound, because they have already expounded, as before alleged, nor yet do they always confine themselves to the express terms of their respective standards, yet they acknowledge them to be their standards and profess to hold them fast. Yea, moreover, some of them profess, and, if we may conclude from facts, we believe each of them is disposed to defend by occasional vindications (or testimonies, as some call them) the sentiments they have adopted and engrossed in their standards, without at the same time requiring an approbation of those occasional performances as a term of communion. And what should hinder us, or any, adopting the divine standard, as aforesaid, with

equal consistency to do the same for the vindication of the divine truths expressly revealed and enjoined therein? To say that we cannot believe and profess the truth, understand one another, inculcate and vindicate the faith and law of Christ, or do the duties incumbent upon Christians or a Christian Church without a human standard, is not only saying that such a standard is quite essential to the very being of Christianity, and, of course, must have existed before a Church was or could be formed, but it is also saying, that without such a standard, the Bible would be quite inadequate as a rule of faith and duty, or, rather, of no use at all, except to furnish materials for such a work; whereas the Church of Ephesus, long before we have any account of the existence of such a standard, is not only mentioned, with many others, as in a state of existence, and of high attainments too, but is also commended for her vigilance and fidelity in detecting and rejecting false apostles. "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." But should any pretend to say that although such performances be not essential to the very being of the Church, yet are they highly conducive to its well-being and perfection. For the confutation of such an assertion, we would again appeal to Church history and existing facts and leave the judicious and intelligent Christian to determine.

If after all that has been said, any should still pretend to affirm that the plan we profess to adopt and recommend is truly latitudinarian, in the worst and fullest sense of the term, inasmuch as it goes to make void all human efforts to maintain the unity and purity of the Church, by substituting a vague and indefinite approbation of the Scriptures as an alternative for creeds, confessions, and testimonies, and thereby opens a wide door for the reception of all sorts of characters and opinions into the Church. Were we not convinced by experience, that notwithstanding all that has been said, such objections would likely be made, or that some weak persons might possibly consider them as good as demonstration, especially when proceeding from highly influential characters (and there have not been wanting such in all ages to oppose, under various plausible pretenses, the unity and peace of the Church), were it not for these considerations, we should content ourselves with what we have already advanced upon the whole of the subject, as being well assured *that* duly attended to, there would not be the

least room for such an objection; but to prevent if possible such unfounded conclusions, or if this cannot be done, to caution and assist the too credulous and unwary professor, that he may not be carried away all at once with the high-toned confidence of bold assertion, we would refer him to the overture for union in truth contained in the foregoing address. Union in truth, among all the manifest subjects of grace and truth, is what we advocate. We carry our views of union no further than *this*, nor do we presume to recommend it upon any other principle than truth alone. Now, surely, truth is something certain and definite; if not, who will take upon him to define and determine it? This we suppose God has sufficiently done already in His holy word. That men, therefore, truly receive and make the proper use of the divine word for walking together in truth and peace, in holiness and charity, is, no doubt, the ardent desire of all the genuine subjects of our holy religion. This, we see, however, they have not done, to the awful detriment and manifest subversion of what we might almost call the primary intention of Christianity. We dare not, therefore, follow their example, nor adopt their ruinous expedients. But does it, therefore, follow that Christians may not, or cannot take proper steps to ascertain that desirable and preceptive unity which the divine word requires and enjoins? Surely no; at least we have supposed no such thing; but, on the contrary, have overtured to our brethen what 'appears to us undeniably just and Scripturally evident, and which, we humbly think, if adopted and acted upon, would have the desired effect; adopted and acted upon, not indeed as a standard for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church, for it pretends not to determine these matters, but rather supposes the existence of a fixed and certain standard of divine original, in which everything that the wisdom of God saw meet to reveal and determine, for *these* and all other purposes, is expressly defined and determined; between the Christian and which, no medium of human determination ought to be interposed. In all this there is surely nothing like the denial of any lawful effort to promote and maintain the Church's unity, though there be a refusal of the unwarrantable interposition of an unauthorized and assuming power.

Let none imagine that we are here determining upon the merits of the overture to which, in the case before us, we find it necessary to appeal in our own defense against the injustice of the supposed

charge above specified. To the judgment of our brethren have we referred that matter, and with them we leave it. All we intend, therefore, is to avail ourselves so far of what we have done, as to show that we have no intention whatsoever of substituting a vague indefinite approbation of the Scriptures as an alternative for creeds, confessions, and testimonies, for the purpose of restoring the Church to her original constitutional unity and purity. In avoiding Scylla we would cautiously guard against being wrecked upon Charybdis. Extremes, we are told, are dangerous. We, therefore, suppose a middle way, a safe way, so plainly marked out by unerring wisdom, that if duly attended to under the divine direction, the wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein, and of such is the kingdom of God: "For He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." We, therefore, conclude it must be a plain way, a way most graciously and most judiciously adapted to the capacity of the subjects, and consequently not the way of subscribing or otherwise approving human standards as a term of admission into His Church, as a test and defense of orthodoxy, which even the compilers themselves are not always agreed about, and which nineteen out of twenty of the Lord's people cannot thoroughly understand. It must be a way very far remote from logical subtilties and metaphysical speculations, and as such we have taken it up, upon the plainest and most obvious principles of divine revelation and common sense—the common sense, we mean, of Christians, exercised upon the plainest and most obvious truths and facts divinely recorded for their instruction. Hence we have supposed, in the first place, the true discrimination of Christian character to consist in an intelligent profession of our faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures, the reality of which profession is manifested by the holy consistency of the tempers and conduct of the professors with the express dictates and approved examples of the divine word. Hence we have humility, faith, piety, temperance, justice, charity, etc., professed and manifested, in the first instance, by the persons professing with self-application the convincing, humbling, encouraging, pious, temperate, just and charitable doctrines and precepts of the inspired volume, as exhibited and enforced in its holy and approved examples, and the sincerity of this profession evidently manifested by the consistency of the professor's temper and conduct with the entire subject of his profession, either by an irreprovable

conformity, like good Zachariah and Elizabeth, which is of all things most desirable, or otherwise, in case of any visible failure, by an apparently sincere repentance and evident reformation. Such professors, and such only, have we supposed to be, by common consent, truly worthy the Christian name. Ask from the one end of heaven to the other, the whole number of such intelligent and consistent professors as we intend and have described, and, we humbly presume, there will not be found one dissenting voice. They will all acknowledge, with one consent, that the true discrimination of Christian character consists in these things, and that the radical or manifest want of any of the aforesaid properties completely destroys the character.

We have here only taken for granted what we suppose no rational professor will venture to deny; namely: that the divine word contains an ample sufficiency upon every one of the foregoing topics to stamp the above character, if so be that the impressions which its express declarations are obviously calculated to produce be truly received; for instance, suppose a person profess to believe, with application to himself, that whole description of human depravity and wretchedness which the Scriptures exhibit of fallen man, in the express declarations and dismal examples of human wickedness therein recorded, contrasted with the holy nature, the righteous requirements, and inflexible justice of an infinitely holy, just, and jealous God, would not the subject-matter of such a profession be amply sufficient to impress the believing mind with the most profound humility, self-abhorrence, and dreadful apprehension of the tremendous effects of sin? Again, should the person profess to believe, in connection with this, all that the Scriptures declare of the sovereign love, mercy, and condescension of God towards guilty, depraved, rebellious man, as the same is manifested in Christ, and in all the gracious declarations, invitations, and promises that are made in and through Him for the relief and encouragement of the guilty, etc., would not all this, taken together, be sufficient to impress the believing mind with the most lively confidence, gratitude, and love? Should this person, moreover, profess that delight and confidence in the divine Redeemer—that voluntary submission to Him—that worship and adoration of Him which the Scriptures expressly declare to have been the habits and practice of His people, would not the subject-matter of this profession be amply sufficient to impress the

believing mind with that dutiful disposition, with that gracious veneration and supreme reverence which the word of God requires? And should not all this taken together satisfy the Church, in so far, in point of profession? If not, there is no alternative but a new revelation; seeing that to deny this, is to assert that a distinct perception and sincere profession of whatever the word declares upon every point of faith and duty, is not only insufficient, as a doctrinal means, to produce a just and suitable impression in the mind of the believing subject, but is also insufficient to satisfy the Church as to a just and adequate profession; if otherwise, then it will necessarily follow, that not every sort of character, but that one sort only, is admissible upon the principle we have adopted; and that by the universal consent of all that we, at least, dare venture to call Christians, *this* is acknowledged to be, exclusively, the true Christian character. Here, then, we have a fixed point, a certain description of character, which combines in every professing subject the Scriptural profession, the evident manifestation of humility, faith, piety, temperance, justice, and charity, instructed by, and evidently answering to the entire declaration of the word upon each of those topics, which, as so many properties, serve to constitute the character. Here, we say, we have a fixed, and at the same time sweeping distinction, which, as of old, manifestly divides the whole world, however otherwise distinguished, into but two classes only. "We know," said the apostle, evidently speaking of such, "that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

Should it be inquired concerning the persons included in this description of character, whether they be Arminians or Calvinists, or both promiscuously huddled together? It may be justly replied, that according to what we have proposed, they can be nominally neither, and of course not both, for we call no man master on earth, for one is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren, are Christians by profession; and as such abstract speculation and argumentative theory make no part either of our profession or practice. Such professors, then, as we intend and have described, are just what their profession and practice make them to be; and this we hope has been Scripturally, and, we might add, satisfactorily defined, in so far, at least, as the limits of so brief a performance would admit. We also entertain the pleasing confidence that the plan of procedure which we have ventured to suggest, if duly attended to, if

fully reduced to practice, would necessarily secure to the professing subject all the advantages of divinely revealed truth, without any liability to conceal, to diminish, or to misrepresent it, as it goes immediately to ascribe everything to God respecting His sovereignty, independence, power, wisdom, goodness, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, condescension, love, and grace, etc., which is ascribed to Him in His word, as also to receive whatever it declares concerning the absolute dependence of the poor, guilty, depraved, polluted creature, upon the divine will, power, and grace for every saving purpose; a just perception and correspondent profession of which, according to the Scriptures, is supposed to constitute that fundamental ingredient in Christian character: true evangelical humility. And so of the rest. Having thus, we hope, Scripturally and evidently determined the character, with the proper mode of ascertaining it, to the satisfaction of all concerned, we next proceed to affirm, with the same Scriptural evidence, that among such, however situated, whether in the same or similar associations, there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions, but that they ought all mutually to receive and acknowledge each other as brethren. As to the truth of this assertion, they are all likewise agreed, without one dissenting voice. We next suggest that for this purpose they ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak the same thing, etc., and that this rule is, and ought to be, the divine standard. Here again we presume there can be no objection; no, not a single dissenting voice. As to the rule itself, we have ventured to allege that the New Testament is the proper and immediate rule, directory, and formula for the New Testament Church, and for the particular duties of Christians, as the Old Testament was for the Old Testament Church, and for the particular duties of the subject under that dispensation; at the same time by no means excluding the Old as fundamental to, illustrative of, and inseparably connected with the New, and as being every way of equal authority, as well as of an entire sameness with it in every point of moral natural duty, though not immediately our rule, without the intervention and coincidence of the New, in which our Lord has taught His people, by the ministry of His holy apostles, all things whatsoever they should observe and do, till the end of the world. Thus we come to the one rule, taking the Old Testament as explained and perfected by the New, and the New as illustrated and enforced by the Old; assuming the latter as the proper and immediate

directory for the Christian Church, as also for the positive and particular duties of Christians as to all things whatsoever they should observe and do. Further, that in the observance of this divine rule, this authentic and infallible directory, all such may come to the desirable coincidence of holy unity and uniformity of profession and practice, we have overtured that they all speak, profess, and practice the very same things that are exhibited upon the sacred page of New Testament Scripture, as spoken and done by the divine appointment and approbation; and that this be extended to every possible instance of uniformity, without addition or diminution, without introducing anything of private opinion or doubtful disputation into the public profession or practice of the Church. Thus and thus have we overtured to all intents and purposes, as may be clearly seen by consulting the overture itself; in which, however, should anything appear not sufficiently explicit, we flatter ourselves it may be fully understood by taking into consideration what has been variously suggested upon this important subject throughout the whole of these premises; so that if any due degree of attention be paid, we should think it next to impossible that we could be so far misunderstood as to be charged with Latitudinarianism in any usual sense of the word. Here we have proposed but one description of character as eligible, or, indeed, as at all admissible to the rights and privileges of Christianity. This description of character we have defined by certain and distinguishing properties, which not only serve to distinguish it from every other, but in which all the real subjects themselves are agreed, without one exception, all such being mutually and reciprocally acknowledged by each other as legitimate members of the Church of God. All these, moreover, agreeing in the indispensable obligation of their unity, and in the one rule by which it is instructed, and also in the preceptive necessity of an entire uniformity in their public profession and managements for promoting and preserving this unity, that there should be no schism in the body, but that all the members should have the same care one for another; yet in many instances, unhappily, and, we may truly say, involuntarily differing through mistake and mismanagement, which it is our humble desire and endeavour to detect and remove, by obviating everything that causeth difference, being persuaded that as truth is one and indivisible wherever it exists, so all the genuine subjects of it, if disentangled from artificial impediments, must and

will necessarily fall in together, be all on one side, united in one profession, acknowledge each other as brethren, and love as children of the same family. For this purpose we have overtured a certain and determinate application of the rule, to which we presume there can be no reasonable objection, and which, if adopted and acted upon, must, we think, infallibly produce the desired effect; unless we should suppose that to say and do what is expressly said and done before our eyes upon the sacred page, would offend the believer, or that a strict uniformity, and entire Scriptural sameness in profession and practice, would produce divisions and offenses among those who are already united in one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope of their calling, and in one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all, as is confessedly the case with all of this character throughout all the Churches. To induce to this we have also attempted to call their attention to the heinous nature and awful consequences of schism, and to that evil anti-scriptural principle from which it necessarily proceeds. We have likewise endeavoured to show, we humbly think with demonstrable evidence, that there is no alternative but either to adopt that Scriptural uniformity we have recommended, or else continue as we are, bewildered in schisms and overwhelmed with the accursed evils inseparable from such a state. It remains now with our brethren to determine upon the whole of these premises, to adopt or to reject, as they see cause; but, in the meantime, let none impeach us with the latitudinarian expedient of substituting a vague, indefinite approbation of the holy Scriptures as an alternative for the present practice of making the approbation of human standards a term of communion; as it is undeniably evident that nothing can be further from our intention. Were we to judge of what we humbly propose and urge as indispensably necessary for the reformation and unity of the Church, we should rather apprehend that there was reason to fear a charge of a very different nature; namely: that we aimed at too much strictness, both as to the description of character which we say ought only to be admitted, and also as to the use and application of the rule. But should this be the case, we shall cheerfully bear with it, as being fully satisfied that not only the common sentiment of all apparently sincere, intelligent, and practical Christians is on our side, but that also the plainest and most ample testimonies of the inspired volume sufficiently attest the truth and

propriety of what we plead for, as essential to the Scriptural unity and purity of the Christian Church, and this, we humbly presume, is what we should incessantly aim at. It would be strange, indeed, if, in contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we should overlook those fruits of righteousness, that manifest humility, piety, temperance, justice, and charity, without which faith itself is dead, being alone. We trust we have not so learned Christ; if so be we have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus, we must have learned a very different lesson indeed. While we would, therefore, insist upon an entire conformity to the Scriptures in profession, that we might all believe and speak the same things, and thus be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, we would, with equal scrupulosity, insist upon and look for an entire conformity to them in practice, in all those whom we acknowledge as our brethren in Christ. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Therefore whosoever heareth those sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye say and do not." We, therefore, conclude that to advocate unity alone, however desirable in itself, without at the same time purging the Church of apparently unsanctified characters, even of all that cannot show their faith by their works, would be, at best, but a poor, superficial, skin-deep reformation. It is from such characters, then, as the proposed reformation, if carried into effect, would entirely deprive of a name and a place in the Church, that we have the greatest reason to apprehend a determined and obstinate opposition. And alas! there are very many of this description, and in many places, of considerable influence. But neither should this discourage us, when we consider the expressly revealed will of God upon this point, Ezek. xliv. 6, 9, with Matt. xiii. 15, 17; 1 Cor. v. 6, 13, with many other Scriptures. Nor, in the end, will the multitude of unsanctified professors which the proposed reformation would necessarily exclude, have any reason to rejoice in the unfaithfulness of those that either through ignorance, or for filthy lucre sake, indulged them with a name and place in the Church of God. These unfaithful stewards, these now mistaken friends, will one day be considered by such as their most

cruel and treacherous enemies. These, then, are our sentiments upon the entire subject of Church reformation; call it Latitudinarianism, or Puritanism, or what you please; and *this* is the reformation for which we plead. Thus, upon the whole, have we briefly attempted to point out those evils, and to prevent those mistakes which we earnestly desire to see obviated for the general peace, welfare, and prosperity of the Church of God. Our dear brethren, giving credit to our sincere and well-meant intention, will charitably excuse the imperfections of our humble performance, and by the assistance of their better judgment correct those mistakes, and supply those deficiencies which in a first attempt of this nature may have escaped our notice. We are sorry, in the meantime, to have felt a necessity of approaching so near the borders of controversy, by briefly attempting to answer objections which we plainly foresaw would, through mistake or prejudice, be made against our proceedings; controversy making no part of our intended plan. But such objections and surmises having already reached our ears from different quarters, we thought it necessary to attend to them, that, by so doing, we might not only prevent mistakes, but also save our friends the trouble of entering into verbal disputes in order to remove them, and thus prevent, as much as possible, that most unhappy of all practices sanctioned by the plausible pretense of zeal for the truth—religious controversy among professors. We would, therefore, humbly advise our friends to concur with us in our professed and sincere intention to avoid this evil practice. Let it suffice to put into the hands of such as desire information what we hereby publish for that purpose. If this, however, should not satisfy, let them give in their objections in writing; we shall thankfully receive, and seriously consider, with all due attention, whatever comes before us in this way; but verbal controversy we absolutely refuse. Let none imagine that by so saying, we mean to dissuade Christians from affording all the assistance they can to each other as humble inquirers after truth. To decline this friendly office would be to refuse the performance of an important duty. But certainly there is a manifest difference between speaking the truth in love for the edification of our brethren, and attacking each other with a spirit of controversial hostility, to confute and prove each other wrong. We believe it is rare to find one instance of this kind of arguing that does not terminate in bitterness. Let us, therefore, cautiously avoid it. Our Lord says, Matt. xvii. 7:

"Woe unto the world because of offenses." Scott, in his incomparable work lately published in this country, called his Family Bible, observes in his notes upon this place, "that our Lord here intends all these evils within the Church which prejudice men's minds against His religion, or any doctrines of it. The scandalous lives, horrible oppressions, cruelties, and iniquities of men called Christians; their divisions and bloody contentions; their idolatries and superstitions, are at this day the *great offenses* and *causes of stumbling*, to Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans in all the four quarters of the globe, and they furnish infidels of every description with their most dangerous weapons against the truth. The acrimonious controversies agitated among those who agree in the principal doctrines of the Gospel, and their mutual contempt and revilings of each other, together with the extravagant notions and wicked practices found among them, form the grand prejudice in the minds of multitudes against evangelical religion, and harden the hearts of heretics, Pharisees, disguised infidels, and careless sinners against the truths of the Gospel. In these and numberless other ways, it may be said: 'Woe unto the world because of offenses,' for the devil, the sower of these tares, makes use of them in deceiving the nations of the earth and in murdering the souls of men. In the present state of human nature, it must needs be that such offenses should intervene, and God has wise and righteous reasons for permitting them; yet we should consider it as the greatest of evils to be accessory to the destruction of souls; and an awful woe is denounced against every one whose delusions or crimes thus stumble men and set them against the only method of salvation." We conclude with an extract from the Boston Anthology, which, with too many of the same kind that might be adduced, furnish a mournful comment upon the text; we mean, upon the sorrowful subject of our woful divisions and corruptions. The following reply to the Rev. Mr. Cram, missionary from Massachusetts to the Senecas, was made by the principal chiefs and warriors of the six nations in council assembled at Buffalo creek, State of New York, in the presence of the agent of the United States for Indian affairs, in the summer of 1805. "I am come, brethren," said the missionary, "to enlighten your minds and to instruct you how to worship the great Spirit agreeably to His will, and to preach to you the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. There is but one way to serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way, you cannot be happy hereafter." To

which they reply: "Brother, we understand that your religion is written in a book. You say that there is but one way to worship and serve the great Spirit. If there be but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agree as you can all read the book? Brother, we do not understand these things. We are told your religion was given to your forefathers; we, also, have a religion which was given to our forefathers; it teaches us to be *thankful* for all the favours we receive; to *love* one another, and to be *united*. We never quarrel about religion. We are told you have been preaching to the white people in this place. Those people are our neighbours, we are acquainted with them. We will wait a little to see what effect your preaching has upon *them*. If we find it does them good, makes them *honest*, and *less* disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again of what you have said." Thus closed the conference. Alas, poor people! how do our divisions and corruptions stand in your way! What a pity that you find us not upon original ground, such as the apostles left the primitive Churches! Had we but exhibited to you their unity and charity; their humble, honest, and affectionate deportment towards each other and towards all men, you would not have had those evil and shameful things to object to our holy religion, and to prejudice your minds against it. But your conversion, it seems, awaits our reformation; awaits our return to primitive unity and love. To this may the God of mercy speedily restore us, both for your sakes and our own, that *His way* may be known upon earth, and His saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Amen, and amen.

Postscript

THE publication of the foregoing address has been delayed much longer than was at first expected, through an unforeseen difficulty of obtaining paper of the quality intended. This difficulty and detention has also interfered with the publication of the discourse delivered at the first general meeting of the society, held in Washington, November 2d, in pursuance of resolution VII, which discourse the committee has requested Mr. Campbell to have published, as soon as conveniency may serve for that purpose. At

charge above specified. To the judgment of our brethren have we referred that matter, and with them we leave it. All we intend, therefore, is to avail ourselves so far of what we have done, as to show that we have no intention whatsoever of substituting a vague indefinite approbation of the Scriptures as an alternative for creeds, confessions, and testimonies, for the purpose of restoring the Church to her original constitutional unity and purity. In avoiding Scylla we would cautiously guard against being wrecked upon Charybdis. Extremes, we are told, are dangerous. We, therefore, suppose a middle way, a safe way, so plainly marked out by unerring wisdom, that if duly attended to under the divine direction, the wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein, and of such is the kingdom of God: "For He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." We, therefore, conclude it must be a plain way, a way most graciously and most judiciously adapted to the capacity of the subjects, and consequently not the way of subscribing or otherwise approving human standards as a term of admission into His Church, as a test and defense of orthodoxy, which even the compilers themselves are not always agreed about, and which nineteen out of twenty of the Lord's people cannot thoroughly understand. It must be a way very far remote from logical subtilties and metaphysical speculations, and as such we have taken it up, upon the plainest and most obvious principles of divine revelation and common sense—the common sense, we mean, of Christians, exercised upon the plainest and most obvious truths and facts divinely recorded for their instruction. Hence we have supposed, in the first place, the true discrimination of Christian character to consist in an intelligent profession of our faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures, the reality of which profession is manifested by the holy consistency of the tempers and conduct of the professors with the express dictates and approved examples of the divine word. Hence we have humility, faith, piety, temperance, justice, charity, etc., professed and manifested, in the first instance, by the persons professing with self-application the convincing, humbling, encouraging, pious, temperate, just and charitable doctrines and precepts of the inspired volume, as exhibited and enforced in its holy and approved examples, and the sincerity of this profession evidently manifested by the consistency of the professor's temper and conduct with the entire subject of his profession, either by an irreprovable

But, however this may be, we are by no means to be understood as at all wishing to deprive our fellow-Christians of any necessary and possible assistance to understand the Scriptures, or to come to a distinct and particular knowledge of every truth they contain, for which purpose the Westminster Confession and catechisms may, with many other excellent performances, prove eminently useful. But, having served ourselves of these, let our profiting appear to all, by our manifest acquaintance with the Bible; by making our profession of faith and obedience; by declaring its divine dictates, in which we acquiesce, as the subject-matter and rule of both; in our ability to take the Scripture in its connection upon these subjects, so as to understand one part of it by the assistance of another; and in manifesting our self-knowledge, our knowledge of the way of salvation and of the mystery of the Christian life, in the express light of divine revelation, by a direct and immediate reference to, and correct repetition of what it declares upon those subjects. We take it for granted that no man either knows God, or himself, or the way of salvation, but in so far as he has heard and understood His voice upon those subjects, as addressed to him in the Scriptures, and that, therefore, whatever he has heard and learned of a saving nature, is contained in the express terms of the Bible. If so, in the express terms, in and by which "he hath heard and learned of the Father," let him declare it. This by no means forbids him to use helps, but, we humbly presume, will effectually prevent him from resting either in them or upon them, which is the evil so justly complained of; from taking up with the directory instead of the object to which it directs. Thus will the whole subject of his faith and duty, in so far as he has attained, be expressly declared in a "Thus saith the Lord." And is it not worthy of remark, that of whatever use other books may be, to direct and lead us to the Bible, or to prepare and assist us to understand it, yet the Bible never directs us to any book but itself. When we come forward, then, as Christians, to be received by the Church, which, properly speaking, has but one book, "For to it were committed the oracles of God," let us hear of none else. Is it not upon the credible profession of our faith in, and obedience to its divine contents, that the Church is bound to receive applicants for admission? And does not a profession of our faith and obedience necessarily presuppose a knowledge of the dictates we profess to believe and obey? Surely, then, we can declare them, and as surely,

if our faith and obedience be divine, as to the subject-matter, rule, and reason of them, it must be a "Thus saith the Lord"; if otherwise, they are merely human, being taught by the precepts of men. In the case then before us, that is, examination for Church-membership, let the question no longer be, What does any human system say of the primitive or present state of man? of the person, offices, and relations of Christ, etc., etc.? or of this, that, or the other duty? but, What says the Bible? Were this mode of procedure adopted, how much better acquainted with their Bibles would Christians be? What an important alteration would it also make in the education of youth? Would it not lay all candidates for admission into the Church under the happy necessity of becoming particularly acquainted with the holy Scriptures? whereas, according to the present practice, thousands know little about them.

One thing still remains that may appear matter of difficulty or objection to some, namely, that such a close adherence to the express letter of the divine word, as we seem to propose, for the restoration and maintenance of Christian unity, would not only interfere with the free communication of our sentiments one to another upon religious subjects, but must, of course, also necessarily interfere with the public preaching and expounding of the Scriptures for the edification of the Church. Such as feel disposed to make this objection, should justly consider that one of a similar nature, and quite as plausible, might be made to the adoption of human standards, especially when made as some of them confessedly are, "the standard for all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government." In such a case it might, with as much justice, at least, be objected to the adopters: You have now no more use for the Bible; you have got another book, which you have adopted as a standard for all religious purposes; you have no further use for explaining the Scriptures, either as to matter of faith or duty, for this you have confessedly done already in your standard, wherein you have determined all matters of this nature. You also profess to hold fast the form of sound words, which you have thus adopted, and therefore you must never open your mouth upon any subject in any other terms than those of your standard. In the meantime, would any of the parties which has thus adopted its respective standard, consider any of these charges just? If not, let them do as they would be done by. We must confess, however, that for our part, we cannot see how, with any shadow of consistency, some

of them could clear themselves, especially of the first; that is to say, if words have any determinate meaning; for certainly it would appear almost, if not altogether incontrovertible, that a book adopted by any party as its standard for all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, must be considered as the Bible of that party. And after all that can be said in favour of such a performance, be it called Bible, standard, or what it may, it is neither anything more nor better than the judgment or opinion of the party composing or adopting it, and, therefore, wants the sanction of a divine authority, except in the opinion of the party which has thus adopted it. But can the opinion of any party, be it ever so respectable, give the stamp of a divine authority to its judgments? If not, then every human standard is deficient in this leading, all-important, and indispensable property of a rule or standard for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church of God. But, without insisting further upon the intrinsic and irremediable deficiency of human standards for the above purpose (which is undeniably evident if it be granted that a divine authority is indispensably necessary to constitute a standard or rule for divine things, such as is the constitution and managements, the faith, and worship of the Christian Church), we would humbly ask, Would any of the parties consider as just the foregoing objections, however conclusive and well founded all or any of them may appear? We believe they would not. And may we not with equal consistency hold fast the expressly revealed will of God, in the very terms in which it is expressed in His holy word, as the very expression of our faith and express rule of our duty, and yet take the same liberty that they do, notwithstanding their professed and steadfast adherence to their respective standards? We find they do not cease to expound, because they have already expounded, as before alleged, nor yet do they always confine themselves to the express terms of their respective standards, yet they acknowledge them to be their standards and profess to hold them fast. Yea, moreover, some of them profess, and, if we may conclude from facts, we believe each of them is disposed to defend by occasional vindications (or testimonies, as some call them) the sentiments they have adopted and engrossed in their standards, without at the same time requiring an approbation of those occasional performances as a term of communion. And what should hinder us, or any, adopting the divine standard, as aforesaid, with

directory for the Christian Church, as also for the positive and particular duties of Christians as to all things whatsoever they should observe and do. Further, that in the observance of this divine rule, this authentic and infallible directory, all such may come to the desirable coincidence of holy unity and uniformity of profession and practice, we have overtured that they all speak, profess, and practice the very same things that are exhibited upon the sacred page of New Testament Scripture, as spoken and done by the divine appointment and approbation; and that this be extended to every possible instance of uniformity, without addition or diminution, without introducing anything of private opinion or doubtful disputation into the public profession or practice of the Church. Thus and thus have we overtured to all intents and purposes, as may be clearly seen by consulting the overture itself; in which, however, should anything appear not sufficiently explicit, we flatter ourselves it may be fully understood by taking into consideration what has been variously suggested upon this important subject throughout the whole of these premises; so that if any due degree of attention be paid, we should think it next to impossible that we could be so far misunderstood as to be charged with Latitudinarianism in any usual sense of the word. Here we have proposed but one description of character as eligible, or, indeed, as at all admissible to the rights and privileges of Christianity. This description of character we have defined by certain and distinguishing properties, which not only serve to distinguish it from every other, but in which all the real subjects themselves are agreed, without one exception, all such being mutually and reciprocally acknowledged by each other as legitimate members of the Church of God. All these, moreover, agreeing in the indispensable obligation of their unity, and in the one rule by which it is instructed, and also in the preceptive necessity of an entire uniformity in their public profession and managements for promoting and preserving this unity, that there should be no schism in the body, but that all the members should have the same care one for another; yet in many instances, unhappily, and, we may truly say, involuntarily differing through mistake and mismanagement, which it is our humble desire and endeavour to detect and remove, by obviating everything that causeth difference, being persuaded that as truth is one and indivisible wherever it exists, so all the genuine subjects of it, if disentangled from artificial impediments, must and

will necessarily fall in together, be all on one side, united in one profession, acknowledge each other as brethren, and love as children of the same family. For this purpose we have overtured a certain and determinate application of the rule, to which we presume there can be no reasonable objection, and which, if adopted and acted upon, must, we think, infallibly produce the desired effect; unless we should suppose that to say and do what is expressly said and done before our eyes upon the sacred page, would offend the believer, or that a strict uniformity, and entire Scriptural sameness in profession and practice, would produce divisions and offenses among those who are already united in one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope of their calling, and in one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all, as is confessedly the case with all of this character throughout all the Churches. To induce to this we have also attempted to call their attention to the heinous nature and awful consequences of schism, and to that evil anti-scriptural principle from which it necessarily proceeds. We have likewise endeavoured to show, we humbly think with demonstrable evidence, that there is no alternative but either to adopt that Scriptural uniformity we have recommended, or else continue as we are, bewildered in schisms and overwhelmed with the accursed evils inseparable from such a state. It remains now with our brethren to determine upon the whole of these premises, to adopt or to reject, as they see cause; but, in the meantime, let none impeach us with the latitudinarian expedient of substituting a vague, indefinite approbation of the holy Scriptures as an alternative for the present practice of making the approbation of human standards a term of communion; as it is undeniably evident that nothing can be further from our intention. Were we to judge of what we humbly propose and urge as indispensably necessary for the reformation and unity of the Church, we should rather apprehend that there was reason to fear a charge of a very different nature; namely: that we aimed at too much strictness, both as to the description of character which we say ought only to be admitted, and also as to the use and application of the rule. But should this be the case, we shall cheerfully bear with it, as being fully satisfied that not only the common sentiment of all apparently sincere, intelligent, and practical Christians is on our side, but that also the plainest and most ample testimonies of the inspired volume sufficiently attest the truth and

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cruel and treacherous enemies. These, then, are our sentiments upon the entire subject of Church reformation; call it Latitudinarianism, or Puritanism, or what you please; and *this* is the reformation for which we plead. Thus, upon the whole, have we briefly attempted to point out those evils, and to prevent those mistakes which we earnestly desire to see obviated for the general peace, welfare, and prosperity of the Church of God. Our dear brethren, giving credit to our sincere and well-meant intention, will charitably excuse the imperfections of our humble performance, and by the assistance of their better judgment correct those mistakes, and supply those deficiencies which in a first attempt of this nature may have escaped our notice. We are sorry, in the meantime, to have felt a necessity of approaching so near the borders of controversy, by briefly attempting to answer objections which we plainly foresaw would, through mistake or prejudice, be made against our proceedings; controversy making no part of our intended plan. But such objections and surmises having already reached our ears from different quarters, we thought it necessary to attend to them, that, by so doing, we might not only prevent mistakes, but also save our friends the trouble of entering into verbal disputes in order to remove them, and thus prevent, as much as possible, that most unhappy of all practices sanctioned by the plausible pretense of zeal for the truth—religious controversy among professors. We would, therefore, humbly advise our friends to concur with us in our professed and sincere intention to avoid this evil practice. Let it suffice to put into the hands of such as desire information what we hereby publish for that purpose. If this, however, should not satisfy, let them give in their objections in writing; we shall thankfully receive, and seriously consider, with all due attention, whatever comes before us in this way; but verbal controversy we absolutely refuse. Let none imagine that by so saying, we mean to dissuade Christians from affording all the assistance they can to each other as humble inquirers after truth. To decline this friendly office would be to refuse the performance of an important duty. But certainly there is a manifest difference between speaking the truth in love for the edification of our brethren, and attacking each other with a spirit of controversial hostility, to confute and prove each other wrong. We believe it is rare to find one instance of this kind of arguing that does not terminate in bitterness. Let us, therefore, cautiously avoid it. Our Lord says, Matt. xvii. 7:

"Woe unto the world because of offenses." Scott, in his incomparable work lately published in this country, called his Family Bible, observes in his notes upon this place, "that our Lord here intends all these evils within the Church which prejudice men's minds against His religion, or any doctrines of it. The scandalous lives, horrible oppressions, cruelties, and iniquities of men called Christians; their divisions and bloody contentions; their idolatries and superstitions, are at this day the *great offenses* and *causes of stumbling*, to Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans in all the four quarters of the globe, and they furnish infidels of every description with their most dangerous weapons against the truth. The acrimonious controversies agitated among those who agree in the principal doctrines of the Gospel, and their mutual contempt and revilings of each other, together with the extravagant notions and wicked practices found among them, form the grand prejudice in the minds of multitudes against evangelical religion, and harden the hearts of heretics, Pharisees, disguised infidels, and careless sinners against the truths of the Gospel. In these and numberless other ways, it may be said: 'Woe unto the world because of offenses,' for the devil, the sower of these tares, makes use of them in deceiving the nations of the earth and in murdering the souls of men. In the present state of human nature, it must needs be that such offenses should intervene, and God has wise and righteous reasons for permitting them; yet we should consider it as the greatest of evils to be accessory to the destruction of souls; and an awful woe is denounced against every one whose delusions or crimes thus stumble men and set them against the only method of salvation." We conclude with an extract from the Boston Anthology, which, with too many of the same kind that might be adduced, furnish a mournful comment upon the text; we mean, upon the sorrowful subject of our woful divisions and corruptions. The following reply to the Rev. Mr. Cram, missionary from Massachusetts to the Senecas, was made by the principal chiefs and warriors of the six nations in council assembled at Buffalo creek, State of New York, in the presence of the agent of the United States for Indian affairs, in the summer of 1805. "I am come, brethren," said the missionary, "to enlighten your minds and to instruct you how to worship the great Spirit agreeably to His will, and to preach to you the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. There is but one way to serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way, you cannot be happy hereafter." To

which they reply: "Brother, we understand that your religion is written in a book. You say that there is but one way to worship and serve the great Spirit. If there be but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agree as you can all read the book? Brother, we do not understand these things. We are told your religion was given to your forefathers; we, also, have a religion which was given to our forefathers; it teaches us to be *thankful* for all the favours we receive; to *love* one another, and to be *united*. We never quarrel about religion. We are told you have been preaching to the white people in this place. Those people are our neighbours, we are acquainted with them. We will wait a little to see what effect your preaching has upon *them*. If we find it does them good, makes them *honest*, and *less* disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again of what you have said." Thus closed the conference. Alas, poor people! how do our divisions and corruptions stand in your way! What a pity that you find us not upon original ground, such as the apostles left the primitive Churches! Had we but exhibited to you their unity and charity; their humble, honest, and affectionate deportment towards each other and towards all men, you would not have had those evil and shameful things to object to our holy religion, and to prejudice your minds against it. But your conversion, it seems, awaits our reformation; awaits our return to primitive unity and love. To this may the God of mercy speedily restore us, both for your sakes and our own, that *His way* may be known upon earth, and His saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Amen, and amen.

Postscript

THE publication of the foregoing address has been delayed much longer than was at first expected, through an unforeseen difficulty of obtaining paper of the quality intended. This difficulty and detention has also interfered with the publication of the discourse delivered at the first general meeting of the society, held in Washington, November 2d, in pursuance of resolution VII, which discourse the committee has requested Mr. Campbell to have published, as soon as conveniency may serve for that purpose. At

the first monthly meeting of the committee, December 14, (see resolution VI,) the following considerations and proposals for the better carrying into effect the highly interesting and comprehensive object of the foregoing address were submitted and received with approbation, viz: That considering the very extensive and important design for which we have associated, as specified in the foregoing pages, wherein we propose and urge the necessity of a thorough reformation in all things civil and religious according to the word of God, as a duty of indispensable obligation upon all the highly favoured subjects of the Gospel, and especially in this country, where the Lord has been graciously pleased to favour His professing people with such ample opportunities for the prosecution and accomplishment of those blessed and desirable purposes, it behooves us, in so doing, to exert our utmost energies in every possible direction that may conduce to render successful this arduous and important undertaking.

Besides what has been already agreed upon and recommended in the foregoing pages, there yet remain two things of apparently great importance for promoting the grand object of our association, which this committee would do well to consider, as they seem to fall within the prescribed limits of its operation; and also as it appears to be within the compass of its power to take effectual steps for ascertaining the advantages, which the things intended, if duly executed, would appear obviously calculated to produce. The first of these is a catechetical exhibition of the fullness and precision of the holy Scriptures upon the entire subject of Christianity—an exhibition of that complete system of faith and duty expressly contained in the sacred oracles; respecting the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Christian Church. The second thing intended is a periodical publication, for the express purpose of detecting and exposing the various antichristian enormities, innovations and corruptions, which infect the Christian Church, which counteract and oppose the benign and gracious tendency of the Gospel—the promotion and establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth; by means of which an infinitely good and gracious God has designed to bless the nations—to ameliorate as much as possible the present wretched and suffering state of mankind; upon the success and establishment of which depends the spiritual and temporal welfare of every individual of the human family. Whatever, therefore, has a tendency to undermine, or in anywise to counteract and oppose the interest of this benign and

But, however this may be, we are by no means to be understood as at all wishing to deprive our fellow-Christians of any necessary and possible assistance to understand the Scriptures, or to come to a distinct and particular knowledge of every truth they contain, for which purpose the Westminster Confession and catechisms may, with many other excellent performances, prove eminently useful. But, having served ourselves of these, let our profiting appear to all, by our manifest acquaintance with the Bible; by making our profession of faith and obedience; by declaring its divine dictates, in which we acquiesce, as the subject-matter and rule of both; in our ability to take the Scripture in its connection upon these subjects, so as to understand one part of it by the assistance of another; and in manifesting our self-knowledge, our knowledge of the way of salvation and of the mystery of the Christian life, in the express light of divine revelation, by a direct and immediate reference to, and correct repetition of what it declares upon those subjects. We take it for granted that no man either knows God, or himself, or the way of salvation, but in so far as he has heard and understood His voice upon those subjects, as addressed to him in the Scriptures, and that, therefore, whatever he has heard and learned of a saving nature, is contained in the express terms of the Bible. If so, in the express terms, in and by which "he hath heard and learned of the Father," let him declare it. This by no means forbids him to use helps, but, we humbly presume, will effectually prevent him from resting either in them or upon them, which is the evil so justly complained of; from taking up with the directory instead of the object to which it directs. Thus will the whole subject of his faith and duty, in so far as he has attained, be expressly declared in a "Thus saith the Lord." And is it not worthy of remark, that of whatever use other books may be, to direct and lead us to the Bible, or to prepare and assist us to understand it, yet the Bible never directs us to any book but itself. When we come forward, then, as Christians, to be received by the Church, which, properly speaking, has but one book, "For to it were committed the oracles of God," let us hear of none else. Is it not upon the credible profession of our faith in, and obedience to its divine contents, that the Church is bound to receive applicants for admission? And does not a profession of our faith and obedience necessarily presuppose a knowledge of the dictates we profess to believe and obey? Surely, then, we can declare them, and as surely,

if our faith and obedience be divine, as to the subject-matter, rule, and reason of them, it must be a "Thus saith the Lord"; if otherwise, they are merely human, being taught by the precepts of men. In the case then before us, that is, examination for Church-membership, let the question no longer be, What does any human system say of the primitive or present state of man? of the person, offices, and relations of Christ, etc., etc.? or of this, that, or the other duty? but, What says the Bible? Were this mode of procedure adopted, how much better acquainted with their Bibles would Christians be? What an important alteration would it also make in the education of youth? Would it not lay all candidates for admission into the Church under the happy necessity of becoming particularly acquainted with the holy Scriptures? whereas, according to the present practice, thousands know little about them.

One thing still remains that may appear matter of difficulty or objection to some, namely, that such a close adherence to the express letter of the divine word, as we seem to propose, for the restoration and maintenance of Christian unity, would not only interfere with the free communication of our sentiments one to another upon religious subjects, but must, of course, also necessarily interfere with the public preaching and expounding of the Scriptures for the edification of the Church. Such as feel disposed to make this objection, should justly consider that one of a similar nature, and quite as plausible, might be made to the adoption of human standards, especially when made as some of them confessedly are, "the standard for all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government." In such a case it might, with as much justice, at least, be objected to the adopters: You have now no more use for the Bible; you have got another book, which you have adopted as a standard for all religious purposes; you have no further use for explaining the Scriptures, either as to matter of faith or duty, for this you have confessedly done already in your standard, wherein you have determined all matters of this nature. You also profess to hold fast the form of sound words, which you have thus adopted, and therefore you must never open your mouth upon any subject in any other terms than those of your standard. In the meantime, would any of the parties which has thus adopted its respective standard, consider any of these charges just? If not, let them do as they would be done by. We must confess, however, that for our part, we cannot see how, with any shadow of consistency, some

of them could clear themselves, especially of the first; that is to say, if words have any determinate meaning; for certainly it would appear almost, if not altogether incontrovertible, that a book adopted by any party as its standard for all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, must be considered as the Bible of that party. And after all that can be said in favour of such a performance, be it called Bible, standard, or what it may, it is neither anything more nor better than the judgment or opinion of the party composing or adopting it, and, therefore, wants the sanction of a divine authority, except in the opinion of the party which has thus adopted it. But can the opinion of any party, be it ever so respectable, give the stamp of a divine authority to its judgments? If not, then every human standard is deficient in this leading, all-important, and indispensable property of a rule or standard for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church of God. But, without insisting further upon the intrinsic and irremediable deficiency of human standards for the above purpose (which is undeniably evident if it be granted that a divine authority is indispensably necessary to constitute a standard or rule for divine things, such as is the constitution and managements, the faith, and worship of the Christian Church), we would humbly ask, Would any of the parties consider as just the foregoing objections, however conclusive and well founded all or any of them may appear? We believe they would not. And may we not with equal consistency hold fast the expressly revealed will of God, in the very terms in which it is expressed in His holy word, as the very expression of our faith and express rule of our duty, and yet take the same liberty that they do, notwithstanding their professed and steadfast adherence to their respective standards? We find they do not cease to expound, because they have already expounded, as before alleged, nor yet do they always confine themselves to the express terms of their respective standards, yet they acknowledge them to be their standards and profess to hold them fast. Yea, moreover, some of them profess, and, if we may conclude from facts, we believe each of them is disposed to defend by occasional vindications (or testimonies, as some call them) the sentiments they have adopted and engrossed in their standards, without at the same time requiring an approbation of those occasional performances as a term of communion. And what should hinder us, or any, adopting the divine standard, as aforesaid, with

equal consistency to do the same for the vindication of the divine truths expressly revealed and enjoined therein? To say that we cannot believe and profess the truth, understand one another, inculcate and vindicate the faith and law of Christ, or do the duties incumbent upon Christians or a Christian Church without a human standard, is not only saying that such a standard is quite essential to the very being of Christianity, and, of course, must have existed before a Church was or could be formed, but it is also saying, that without such a standard, the Bible would be quite inadequate as a rule of faith and duty, or, rather, of no use at all, except to furnish materials for such a work; whereas the Church of Ephesus, long before we have any account of the existence of such a standard, is not only mentioned, with many others, as in a state of existence, and of high attainments too, but is also commended for her vigilance and fidelity in detecting and rejecting false apostles. "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." But should any pretend to say that although such performances be not essential to the very being of the Church, yet are they highly conducive to its well-being and perfection. For the confutation of such an assertion, we would again appeal to Church history and existing facts and leave the judicious and intelligent Christian to determine.

If after all that has been said, any should still pretend to affirm that the plan we profess to adopt and recommend is truly latitudinarian, in the worst and fullest sense of the term, inasmuch as it goes to make void all human efforts to maintain the unity and purity of the Church, by substituting a vague and indefinite approbation of the Scriptures as an alternative for creeds, confessions, and testimonies, and thereby opens a wide door for the reception of all sorts of characters and opinions into the Church. Were we not convinced by experience, that notwithstanding all that has been said, such objections would likely be made, or that some weak persons might possibly consider them as good as demonstration, especially when proceeding from highly influential characters (and there have not been wanting such in all ages to oppose, under various plausible pretenses, the unity and peace of the Church), were it not for these considerations, we should content ourselves with what we have already advanced upon the whole of the subject, as being well assured *that* duly attended to, there would not be the

least room for such an objection; but to prevent if possible such unfounded conclusions, or if this cannot be done, to caution and assist the too credulous and unwary professor, that he may not be carried away all at once with the high-toned confidence of bold assertion, we would refer him to the overture for union in truth contained in the foregoing address. Union in truth, among all the manifest subjects of grace and truth, is what we advocate. We carry our views of union no further than *this*, nor do we presume to recommend it upon any other principle than truth alone. Now, surely, truth is something certain and definite; if not, who will take upon him to define and determine it? This we suppose God has sufficiently done already in His holy word. That men, therefore, truly receive and make the proper use of the divine word for walking together in truth and peace, in holiness and charity, is, no doubt, the ardent desire of all the genuine subjects of our holy religion. This, we see, however, they have not done, to the awful detriment and manifest subversion of what we might almost call the primary intention of Christianity. We dare not, therefore, follow their example, nor adopt their ruinous expedients. But does it, therefore, follow that Christians may not, or cannot take proper steps to ascertain that desirable and preceptive unity which the divine word requires and enjoins? Surely no; at least we have supposed no such thing; but, on the contrary, have overtured to our brethen what appears to us undeniably just and Scripturally evident, and which, we humbly think, if adopted and acted upon, would have the desired effect; adopted and acted upon, not indeed as a standard for the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church, for it pretends not to determine these matters, but rather supposes the existence of a fixed and certain standard of divine original, in which everything that the wisdom of God saw meet to reveal and determine, for *these* and all other purposes, is expressly defined and determined; between the Christian and which, no medium of human determination ought to be interposed. In all this there is surely nothing like the denial of any lawful effort to promote and maintain the Church's unity, though there be a refusal of the unwarrantable interposition of an unauthorized and assuming power.

Let none imagine that we are here determining upon the merits of the overture to which, in the case before us, we find it necessary to appeal in our own defense against the injustice of the supposed

charge above specified. To the judgment of our brethren have we referred that matter, and with them we leave it. All we intend, therefore, is to avail ourselves so far of what we have done, as to show that we have no intention whatsoever of substituting a vague indefinite approbation of the Scriptures as an alternative for creeds, confessions, and testimonies, for the purpose of restoring the Church to her original constitutional unity and purity. In avoiding Scylla we would cautiously guard against being wrecked upon Charybdis. Extremes, we are told, are dangerous. We, therefore, suppose a middle way, a safe way, so plainly marked out by unerring wisdom, that if duly attended to under the divine direction, the wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein, and of such is the kingdom of God: "For He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." We, therefore, conclude it must be a plain way, a way most graciously and most judiciously adapted to the capacity of the subjects, and consequently not the way of subscribing or otherwise approving human standards as a term of admission into His Church, as a test and defense of orthodoxy, which even the compilers themselves are not always agreed about, and which nineteen out of twenty of the Lord's people cannot thoroughly understand. It must be a way very far remote from logical subtilties and metaphysical speculations, and as such we have taken it up, upon the plainest and most obvious principles of divine revelation and common sense—the common sense, we mean, of Christians, exercised upon the plainest and most obvious truths and facts divinely recorded for their instruction. Hence we have supposed, in the first place, the true discrimination of Christian character to consist in an intelligent profession of our faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures, the reality of which profession is manifested by the holy consistency of the tempers and conduct of the professors with the express dictates and approved examples of the divine word. Hence we have humility, faith, piety, temperance, justice, charity, etc., professed and manifested, in the first instance, by the persons professing with self-application the convincing, humbling, encouraging, pious, temperate, just and charitable doctrines and precepts of the inspired volume, as exhibited and enforced in its holy and approved examples, and the sincerity of this profession evidently manifested by the consistency of the professor's temper and conduct with the entire subject of his profession, either by an irreprovable

conformity, like good Zachariah and Elizabeth, which is of all things most desirable, or otherwise, in case of any visible failure, by an apparently sincere repentance and evident reformation. Such professors, and such only, have we supposed to be, by common consent, truly worthy the Christian name. Ask from the one end of heaven to the other, the whole number of such intelligent and consistent professors as we intend and have described, and, we humbly presume, there will not be found one dissenting voice. They will all acknowledge, with one consent, that the true discrimination of Christian character consists in these things, and that the radical or manifest want of any of the aforesaid properties completely destroys the character.

We have here only taken for granted what we suppose no rational professor will venture to deny; namely: that the divine word contains an ample sufficiency upon every one of the foregoing topics to stamp the above character, if so be that the impressions which its express declarations are obviously calculated to produce be truly received; for instance, suppose a person profess to believe, with application to himself, that whole description of human depravity and wretchedness which the Scriptures exhibit of fallen man, in the express declarations and dismal examples of human wickedness therein recorded, contrasted with the holy nature, the righteous requirements, and inflexible justice of an infinitely holy, just, and jealous God, would not the subject-matter of such a profession be amply sufficient to impress the believing mind with the most profound humility, self-abhorrence, and dreadful apprehension of the tremendous effects of sin? Again, should the person profess to believe, in connection with this, all that the Scriptures declare of the sovereign love, mercy, and condescension of God towards guilty, depraved, rebellious man, as the same is manifested in Christ, and in all the gracious declarations, invitations, and promises that are made in and through Him for the relief and encouragement of the guilty, etc., would not all this, taken together, be sufficient to impress the believing mind with the most lively confidence, gratitude, and love? Should this person, moreover, profess that delight and confidence in the divine Redeemer—that voluntary submission to Him—that worship and adoration of Him which the Scriptures expressly declare to have been the habits and practice of His people, would not the subject-matter of this profession be amply sufficient to impress the

believing mind with that dutiful disposition, with that gracious veneration and supreme reverence which the word of God requires? And should not all this taken together satisfy the Church, in so far, in point of profession? If not, there is no alternative but a new revelation; seeing that to deny this, is to assert that a distinct perception and sincere profession of whatever the word declares upon every point of faith and duty, is not only insufficient, as a doctrinal means, to produce a just and suitable impression in the mind of the believing subject, but is also insufficient to satisfy the Church as to a just and adequate profession; if otherwise, then it will necessarily follow, that not every sort of character, but that one sort only, is admissible upon the principle we have adopted; and that by the universal consent of all that we, at least, dare venture to call Christians, *this* is acknowledged to be, exclusively, the true Christian character. Here, then, we have a fixed point, a certain description of character, which combines in every professing subject the Scriptural profession, the evident manifestation of humility, faith, piety, temperance, justice, and charity, instructed by, and evidently answering to the entire declaration of the word upon each of those topics, which, as so many properties, serve to constitute the character. Here, we say, we have a fixed, and at the same time sweeping distinction, which, as of old, manifestly divides the whole world, however otherwise distinguished, into but two classes only. "We know," said the apostle, evidently speaking of such, "that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

Should it be inquired concerning the persons included in this description of character, whether they be Arminians or Calvinists, or both promiscuously huddled together? It may be justly replied, that according to what we have proposed, they can be nominally neither, and of course not both, for we call no man master on earth, for one is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren, are Christians by profession; and as such abstract speculation and argumentative theory make no part either of our profession or practice. Such professors, then, as we intend and have described, are just what their profession and practice make them to be; and this we hope has been Scripturally, and, we might add, satisfactorily defined, in so far, at least, as the limits of so brief a performance would admit. We also entertain the pleasing confidence that the plan of procedure which we have ventured to suggest, if duly attended to, if

fully reduced to practice, would necessarily secure to the professing subject all the advantages of divinely revealed truth, without any liability to conceal, to diminish, or to misrepresent it, as it goes immediately to ascribe everything to God respecting His sovereignty, independence, power, wisdom, goodness, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, condescension, love, and grace, etc., which is ascribed to Him in His word, as also to receive whatever it declares concerning the absolute dependence of the poor, guilty, depraved, polluted creature, upon the divine will, power, and grace for every saving purpose; a just perception and correspondent profession of which, according to the Scriptures, is supposed to constitute that fundamental ingredient in Christian character: true evangelical humility. And so of the rest. Having thus, we hope, Scripturally and evidently determined the character, with the proper mode of ascertaining it, to the satisfaction of all concerned, we next proceed to affirm, with the same Scriptural evidence, that among such, however situated, whether in the same or similar associations, there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions, but that they ought all mutually to receive and acknowledge each other as brethren. As to the truth of this assertion, they are all likewise agreed, without one dissenting voice. We next suggest that for this purpose they ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak the same thing, etc., and that this rule is, and ought to be, the divine standard. Here again we presume there can be no objection; no, not a single dissenting voice. As to the rule itself, we have ventured to allege that the New Testament is the proper and immediate rule, directory, and formula for the New Testament Church, and for the particular duties of Christians, as the Old Testament was for the Old Testament Church, and for the particular duties of the subject under that dispensation; at the same time by no means excluding the Old as fundamental to, illustrative of, and inseparably connected with the New, and as being every way of equal authority, as well as of an entire sameness with it in every point of moral natural duty, though not immediately our rule, without the intervention and coincidence of the New, in which our Lord has taught His people, by the ministry of His holy apostles, all things whatsoever they should observe and do, till the end of the world. Thus we come to the one rule, taking the Old Testament as explained and perfected by the New, and the New as illustrated and enforced by the Old; assuming the latter as the proper and immediate

directory for the Christian Church, as also for the positive and particular duties of Christians as to all things whatsoever they should observe and do. Further, that in the observance of this divine rule, this authentic and infallible directory, all such may come to the desirable coincidence of holy unity and uniformity of profession and practice, we have overtured that they all speak, profess, and practice the very same things that are exhibited upon the sacred page of New Testament Scripture, as spoken and done by the divine appointment and approbation; and that this be extended to every possible instance of uniformity, without addition or diminution, without introducing anything of private opinion or doubtful disputation into the public profession or practice of the Church. Thus and thus have we overtured to all intents and purposes, as may be clearly seen by consulting the overture itself; in which, however, should anything appear not sufficiently explicit, we flatter ourselves it may be fully understood by taking into consideration what has been variously suggested upon this important subject throughout the whole of these premises; so that if any due degree of attention be paid, we should think it next to impossible that we could be so far misunderstood as to be charged with Latitudinarianism in any usual sense of the word. Here we have proposed but one description of character as eligible, or, indeed, as at all admissible to the rights and privileges of Christianity. This description of character we have defined by certain and distinguishing properties, which not only serve to distinguish it from every other, but in which all the real subjects themselves are agreed, without one exception, all such being mutually and reciprocally acknowledged by each other as legitimate members of the Church of God. All these, moreover, agreeing in the indispensable obligation of their unity, and in the one rule by which it is instructed, and also in the preceptive necessity of an entire uniformity in their public profession and managements for promoting and preserving this unity, that there should be no schism in the body, but that all the members should have the same care one for another; yet in many instances, unhappily, and, we may truly say, involuntarily differing through mistake and mismanagement, which it is our humble desire and endeavour to detect and remove, by obviating everything that causeth difference, being persuaded that as truth is one and indivisible wherever it exists, so all the genuine subjects of it, if disentangled from artificial impediments, must and

will necessarily fall in together, be all on one side, united in one profession, acknowledge each other as brethren, and love as children of the same family. For this purpose we have overtured a certain and determinate application of the rule, to which we presume there can be no reasonable objection, and which, if adopted and acted upon, must, we think, infallibly produce the desired effect; unless we should suppose that to say and do what is expressly said and done before our eyes upon the sacred page, would offend the believer, or that a strict uniformity, and entire Scriptural sameness in profession and practice, would produce divisions and offenses among those who are already united in one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope of their calling, and in one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all, as is confessedly the case with all of this character throughout all the Churches. To induce to this we have also attempted to call their attention to the heinous nature and awful consequences of schism, and to that evil anti-scriptural principle from which it necessarily proceeds. We have likewise endeavoured to show, we humbly think with demonstrable evidence, that there is no alternative but either to adopt that Scriptural uniformity we have recommended, or else continue as we are, bewildered in schisms and overwhelmed with the accursed evils inseparable from such a state. It remains now with our brethren to determine upon the whole of these premises, to adopt or to reject, as they see cause; but, in the meantime, let none impeach us with the latitudinarian expedient of substituting a vague, indefinite approbation of the holy Scriptures as an alternative for the present practice of making the approbation of human standards a term of communion; as it is undeniably evident that nothing can be further from our intention. Were we to judge of what we humbly propose and urge as indispensably necessary for the reformation and unity of the Church, we should rather apprehend that there was reason to fear a charge of a very different nature; namely: that we aimed at too much strictness, both as to the description of character which we say ought only to be admitted, and also as to the use and application of the rule. But should this be the case, we shall cheerfully bear with it, as being fully satisfied that not only the common sentiment of all apparently sincere, intelligent, and practical Christians is on our side, but that also the plainest and most ample testimonies of the inspired volume sufficiently attest the truth and

propriety of what we plead for, as essential to the Scriptural unity and purity of the Christian Church, and this, we humbly presume, is what we should incessantly aim at. It would be strange, indeed, if, in contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we should overlook those fruits of righteousness, that manifest humility, piety, temperance, justice, and charity, without which faith itself is dead, being alone. We trust we have not so learned Christ; if so be we have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus, we must have learned a very different lesson indeed. While we would, therefore, insist upon an entire conformity to the Scriptures in profession, that we might all believe and speak the same things, and thus be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, we would, with equal scrupulosity, insist upon and look for an entire conformity to them in practice, in all those whom we acknowledge as our brethren in Christ. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Therefore whosoever heareth those sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye say and do not." We, therefore, conclude that to advocate unity alone, however desirable in itself, without at the same time purging the Church of apparently unsanctified characters, even of all that cannot show their faith by their works, would be, at best, but a poor, superficial, skin-deep reformation. It is from such characters, then, as the proposed reformation, if carried into effect, would entirely deprive of a name and a place in the Church, that we have the greatest reason to apprehend a determined and obstinate opposition. And alas! there are very many of this description, and in many places, of considerable influence. But neither should this discourage us, when we consider the expressly revealed will of God upon this point, Ezek. xliv. 6, 9, with Matt. xiii. 15, 17; 1 Cor. v. 6, 13, with many other Scriptures. Nor, in the end, will the multitude of unsanctified professors which the proposed reformation would necessarily exclude, have any reason to rejoice in the unfaithfulness of those that either through ignorance, or for filthy lucre sake, indulged them with a name and place in the Church of God. These unfaithful stewards, these now mistaken friends, will one day be considered by such as their most

cruel and treacherous enemies. These, then, are our sentiments upon the entire subject of Church reformation; call it Latitudinarianism, or Puritanism, or what you please; and *this* is the reformation for which we plead. Thus, upon the whole, have we briefly attempted to point out those evils, and to prevent those mistakes which we earnestly desire to see obviated for the general peace, welfare, and prosperity of the Church of God. Our dear brethren, giving credit to our sincere and well-meant intention, will charitably excuse the imperfections of our humble performance, and by the assistance of their better judgment correct those mistakes, and supply those deficiencies which in a first attempt of this nature may have escaped our notice. We are sorry, in the meantime, to have felt a necessity of approaching so near the borders of controversy, by briefly attempting to answer objections which we plainly foresaw would, through mistake or prejudice, be made against our proceedings; controversy making no part of our intended plan. But such objections and surmises having already reached our ears from different quarters, we thought it necessary to attend to them, that, by so doing, we might not only prevent mistakes, but also save our friends the trouble of entering into verbal disputes in order to remove them, and thus prevent, as much as possible, that most unhappy of all practices sanctioned by the plausible pretense of zeal for the truth—religious controversy among professors. We would, therefore, humbly advise our friends to concur with us in our professed and sincere intention to avoid this evil practice. Let it suffice to put into the hands of such as desire information what we hereby publish for that purpose. If this, however, should not satisfy, let them give in their objections in writing; we shall thankfully receive, and seriously consider, with all due attention, whatever comes before us in this way; but verbal controversy we absolutely refuse. Let none imagine that by so saying, we mean to dissuade Christians from affording all the assistance they can to each other as humble inquirers after truth. To decline this friendly office would be to refuse the performance of an important duty. But certainly there is a manifest difference between speaking the truth in love for the edification of our brethren, and attacking each other with a spirit of controversial hostility, to confute and prove each other wrong. We believe it is rare to find one instance of this kind of arguing that does not terminate in bitterness. Let us, therefore, cautiously avoid it. Our Lord says, Matt. xvii. 7:

"Woe unto the world because of offenses." Scott, in his incomparable work lately published in this country, called his Family Bible, observes in his notes upon this place, "that our Lord here intends all these evils within the Church which prejudice men's minds against His religion, or any doctrines of it. The scandalous lives, horrible oppressions, cruelties, and iniquities of men called Christians; their divisions and bloody contentions; their idolatries and superstitions, are at this day the *great offenses* and *causes of stumbling*, to Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans in all the four quarters of the globe, and they furnish infidels of every description with their most dangerous weapons against the truth. The acrimonious controversies agitated among those who agree in the principal doctrines of the Gospel, and their mutual contempt and revilings of each other, together with the extravagant notions and wicked practices found among them, form the grand prejudice in the minds of multitudes against evangelical religion, and harden the hearts of heretics, Pharisees, disguised infidels, and careless sinners against the truths of the Gospel. In these and numberless other ways, it may be said: 'Woe unto the world because of offenses,' for the devil, the sower of these tares, makes use of them in deceiving the nations of the earth and in murdering the souls of men. In the present state of human nature, it must needs be that such offenses should intervene, and God has wise and righteous reasons for permitting them; yet we should consider it as the greatest of evils to be accessory to the destruction of souls; and an awful woe is denounced against every one whose delusions or crimes thus stumble men and set them against the only method of salvation." We conclude with an extract from the Boston Anthology, which, with too many of the same kind that might be adduced, furnish a mournful comment upon the text; we mean, upon the sorrowful subject of our woful divisions and corruptions. The following reply to the Rev. Mr. Cram, missionary from Massachusetts to the Senecas, was made by the principal chiefs and warriors of the six nations in council assembled at Buffalo creek, State of New York, in the presence of the agent of the United States for Indian affairs, in the summer of 1805. "I am come, brethren," said the missionary, "to enlighten your minds and to instruct you how to worship the great Spirit agreeably to His will, and to preach to you the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. There is but one way to serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way, you cannot be happy hereafter." To

which they reply: "Brother, we understand that your religion is written in a book. You say that there is but one way to worship and serve the great Spirit. If there be but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agree as you can all read the book? Brother, we do not understand these things. We are told your religion was given to your forefathers; we, also, have a religion which was given to our forefathers; it teaches us to be *thankful* for all the favours we receive; to *love* one another, and to be *united.* We never quarrel about religion. We are told you have been preaching to the white people in this place. Those people are our neighbours, we are acquainted with them. We will wait a little to see what effect your preaching has upon *them.* If we find it does them good, makes them *honest,* and *less* disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again of what you have said." Thus closed the conference. Alas, poor people! how do our divisions and corruptions stand in your way! What a pity that you find us not upon original ground, such as the apostles left the primitive Churches! Had we but exhibited to you their unity and charity; their humble, honest, and affectionate deportment towards each other and towards all men, you would not have had those evil and shameful things to object to our holy religion, and to prejudice your minds against it. But your conversion, it seems, awaits our reformation; awaits our return to primitive unity and love. To this may the God of mercy speedily restore us, both for your sakes and our own, that *His way* may be known upon earth, and His saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Amen, and amen.

Postscript

THE publication of the foregoing address has been delayed much longer than was at first expected, through an unforeseen difficulty of obtaining paper of the quality intended. This difficulty and detention has also interfered with the publication of the discourse delivered at the first general meeting of the society, held in Washington, November 2d, in pursuance of resolution VII, which discourse the committee has requested Mr. Campbell to have published, as soon as conveniency may serve for that purpose. At

the first monthly meeting of the committee, December 14, (see resolution VI,) the following considerations and proposals for the better carrying into effect the highly interesting and comprehensive object of the foregoing address were submitted and received with approbation, viz: That considering the very extensive and important design for which we have associated, as specified in the foregoing pages, wherein we propose, and urge the necessity of a thorough reformation in all things civil and religious according to the word of God, as a duty of indispensable obligation upon all the highly favoured subjects of the Gospel, and especially in this country, where the Lord has been graciously pleased to favour His professing people with such ample opportunities for the prosecution and accomplishment of those blessed and desirable purposes, it behooves us, in so doing, to exert our utmost energies in every possible direction that may conduce to render successful this arduous and important undertaking.

Besides what has been already agreed upon and recommended in the foregoing pages, there yet remain two things of apparently great importance for promoting the grand object of our association, which this committee would do well to consider, as they seem to fall within the prescribed limits of its operation; and also as it appears to be within the compass of its power to take effectual steps for ascertaining the advantages, which the things intended, if duly executed, would appear obviously calculated to produce. The first of these is a catechetical exhibition of the fullness and precision of the holy Scriptures upon the entire subject of Christianity—an exhibition of that complete system of faith and duty expressly contained in the sacred oracles; respecting the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Christian Church. The second thing intended is a periodical publication, for the express purpose of detecting and exposing the various antichristian enormities, innovations and corruptions, which infect the Christian Church, which counteract and oppose the benign and gracious tendency of the Gospel—the promotion and establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth; by means of which an infinitely good and gracious God has designed to bless the nations—to ameliorate as much as possible the present wretched and suffering state of mankind; upon the success and establishment of which depends the spiritual and temporal welfare of every individual of the human family. Whatever, therefore, has a tendency to undermine, or in anywise to counteract and oppose the interest of this benign and

gracious institution of infinite goodness and mercy, becomes an evil of no small magnitude, how trifling soever it might otherwise appear. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." Cant 2, 15. Such a publication from the nature and design of it might with propriety be denominated The Christian Monitor.

The former of these, namely, a catechetical exhibition of the fullness and precision of the sacred Scriptures upon the entire subject of faith and duty would, if duly executed, demonstrably evince their perfect sufficiency independent of human inference—of the dictates of private judgment; and would, at the same time, inevitably lead the professing subject to learn everything, respecting his faith and duty, at the mouth of God, without any reference to human authority—to the judgment or opinions of men. This would, at once, free the great majority of professing Christians from that perplexing uncertainty and implicit faith to which so many of them are unhappily subjected, by the interposition of human definitions and opinions between them and the Bible; many of which are erroneous; and also many of which they are unable to understand, so as to determine certainly, whether they be just and Scriptural, or not. By such an exhibition, therefore, would professed Christians be delivered, not only from these perplexing and dangerous evils ("their faith," by this means, "no longer standing in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,") but they would also become better acquainted with the Scriptures of truth—with that all-important word which shall judge them in the last day:—and at the same time, would come to possess a much more ample and enlarged view of the alone sufficiency and perfection of the Scriptures themselves; advantages these of no small moment to the interest of Christianity. A performance of this nature might with apparent propriety be called the Christian Catechism.

In consequence of these considerations it is proposed and intended, with the approbation and under the patronage of the Christian Association of Washington, to forward as fast as possible the publication of the works above described, viz: To publish in numbers monthly by subscription, commencing with the year 1810—a work entitled the Christian Monitor, each number to consist of 24 pages, stitched in blue, price 12½ cents, type and paper as in the foregoing address.

The numbers to be delivered to the subscribers at the respective places appointed for distribution. The execution of this work to commence as soon as 500 annual subscribers can be obtained. It is to be understood that a number for each month will be duly delivered, though it is probable that the first two or three numbers may come together, as it is not likely that the number of subscribers above specified can be obtained in time to commence the publication in the month of January, now so near at hand.

Also to prepare for the press and proceed to publish as soon as a competent number of subscribers can be obtained, a work entitled the Christian Catechism, to consist of upwards of one hundred pages, type and paper as above, price 50 cents. There will be prefixed to this work a dissertation upon the perfection and sufficiency of the holy Scriptures; in which care will be taken to detect and expose that unhappy ingenuity which has been so frequently exerted to prevent and wrest them from the obvious purpose for which they were graciously designed.

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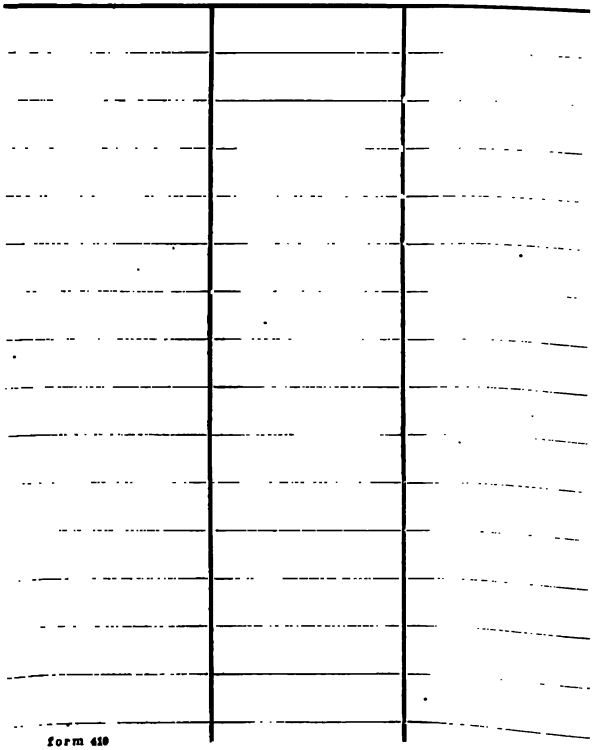

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